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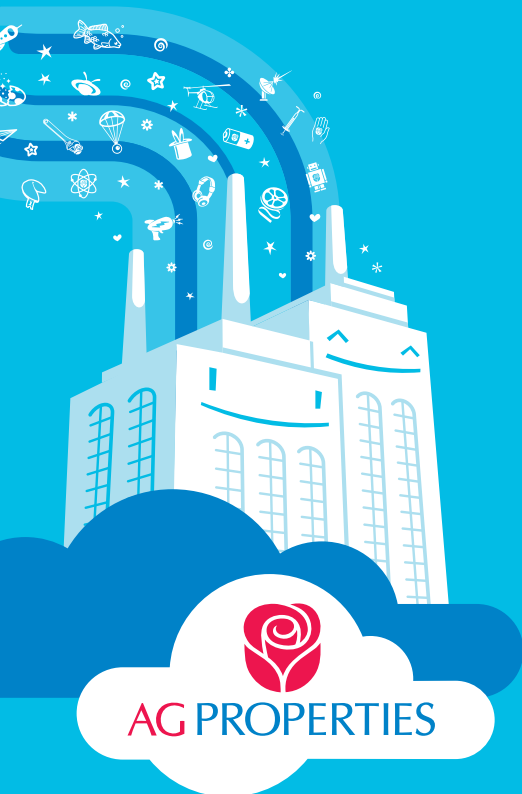


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Cover Our editorial cover features an image of Toronto, Canada-based DHX Licensing's new collectibles-driven property Gaia Nathan, while international and event copies sport an ad for the Discovery Kids brand.

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BUILT FOR SPEED?

One of my great delights in putting together an issue is the receipt of Jim Benton's email with his latest cartoon attached. I'm never quite sure how his biting wit will aptly and comically express itself, but I'm never disappointed with the end result. And this edition's toon (page 11) is no exception. It sums up what most in the licensing industry know, but may be loathe to voice out loud—it's impossible to predict where lightning will strike in the consumer products business and it's anyone's guess when it comes to picking a hit property.

Certainly, a lot can be done to make the most out of a promising property as the growing success of transmedia storytelling and cross-platform planning over the last few years would indicate. (If you want a succinct introduction be sure to read transmedia expert Jeff Gomez's feature "Whole New Worlds" on page 42 of this issue.) But with the increasing shift towards creating large franchises with far-reaching, bottomless universes, and the concomitant dedication of resources focused on long-lead licensing and retail initiatives, a few industry watchers have been speculating whether or not the business is as nimble as it used to be. Is it capable of fully capitalizing on a "bolt from the blue" hit and getting goods in and out of the market before its moment passes? I won't even pretend I can answer this one on my own, so I asked a number of experienced execs to entertain the question.

Neil Friedman, president of Mattel Brands, said, "Speed to market has always been critically important, but more so in this day and age if a property catches on... And the landscape continues to be crowded, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing because there is great content coming from multiple platforms." Similarly, Sesame Workshop SVP and GM of global consumer products Maura Regan contended, "Licensors and licensees have become much more tech savvy and are connecting with consumers in a multitude of ways." She added, "Truly successful licensing programs have always been about line extensions and speed to market—so these new applications are very much in sync with how licensing has always operated." Darren Kyman, executive director of marketing and retail development at Paramount Licensing, said bluntly, "If the demand and dollars are there, you better believe that all parties involved will react quickly to seize that unexpected opportunity."

Interestingly, Cindy Davis, SVP of licensing at CPLG US, pointed out that it might be the mass-market giants that have the most to lose with an unexpected hit. "Often with [mass market] retailers, their lead times are so long that when something heats up, they don't have any available dollars or shelf space," she said. For his part, Rob Corney at UK indie Bulldog Licensing, worried that "there is a hidden risk in the stagnation of creativity" in this climate, and pointed out "licensing is a business entirely reliant on trends and hot brands...the real winners are the ones who can spot the emerging trends and ride the wave of purchase decisions driven by the consumer's desire for the hottest brand, not the biggest marketing budget."

What do you think? I'll hopefully be seeing a number of you at Licensing Show in Las Vegas, so I can get the scoop first-hand.

Cheers,
Lana

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KIDSCREEN OUT & ABOUT

VOLCANO VOYAGES...

Like many folks in the industry, the KidScreen team enjoyed an extra-long MIPTV this year, thanks to the Icelandic volcano. We had lots of good info and leads to follow up in the wake of a really vibrant market where business seemed to have gotten back on track in most regions, but it all had to sit on the backburner for another week while we scrambled to get out of Dodge...er, I mean Europe. Ian and Joce got stuck in transit in Amsterdam with nothing but the clothes on their backs, while Myles, Kate, Kristina and Lauren were stranded in Nice.



Lana made a stop at Cartoons on the Bay in Rapallo, Italy after MIP, where she got into the spirit of Nickelodeon's cocktail party for The Last Airbender with Moonscoop's Lionel Marty (left) and Niccolo Sacchi from Atlantica Entertainment (right). And miraculously, she got out on time through Rome.

All in all, it could have been worse, and I'm sure it was for many of you. So in the spirit of community commiseration (with just a hint of Schadenfreude, if we're honest), we'll be running a special series in *KidScreen Daily* called "Volcano Voyages" that will feature your most harrowing and/or humorous stories of trying to escape the ash cloud and make it back home. If you've got a goodie to share, send it in to Lana (lcastleman@brunico.com) for publication.

ON THE INDUSTRY TRAIL...

We're a bit nervous to take to the skies again, but life goes on, and so must our busy travel schedule! At the start of the month, Joce and Ian will be down in Santa Monica hosting KidScreen's Transmedia Bootcamp, which has sold out with its promise of practical how-to transmedia training taught by Jeff Gomez—a world-leading expert who Disney, Hasbro, Mattel, Twentieth Century Fox and Microsoft call in for transmedia guidance.

Meanwhile, Lana, Gary (grusak@brunico.com), Myles (mhobbs@brunico.com) and Kristina (kejem@brunico.com) will be in Vegas for Licensing Show, so if you haven't booked some time to catch them up on all of your consumer products news and plans, get in touch today to swap schedules.

And our intrepid Senior Online Writer Wendy Goldman will be jetting down to L.A. to hang with the gaming crowd at E3 Expo. She's looking to meet as many folks as she can, so drop her a line at wgoldman@brunico.com if you'll also be at the show.

KIDSCREEN SUMMIT 2011—DATES ANNOUNCED!

We're excited to tell you that the Summit is expanding next year to run over four days instead of three. We're planning a "Meeting Madness" day to kick the event off with a bang. The Delegates Lounge will be open early on Day One and the conference schedule kept very light to let you max out on appointments and carve out more time to attend sessions the rest of the week.

We'll also run **more Speed Pitching** sessions with longer pitch slots, **Lunch Roundtables** so you can break bread with broadcasters & investors, and **Meet the Team Q&As** to help you navigate global kidnets. **And everyone will be invited to the KidScreen Awards Show!**

Mark it on your calendars from **February 15 to 18** and plan to join us in New York for the best kids entertainment event of the year!

UPCOMING ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Fit For Viewing: A Sponsored Supplement

In our July/August issue—the one buyers will be reading when they start to plan their MIPCOM schedules—we'll be showcasing health & wellness programming for kids. So if you've got titles that aim to inspire Generation Next to make responsible choices about their fitness and diet, book now to make sure you get the profile you deserve for helping kids around the world lead healthier lives.

Booking deadline: June 18

Interviews done: July 2

Ads due: July 9

The KidScreen Calendar

Let's face it: Even in the age of iPhones, Blackberrys and Outlook, we all still look at wall calendars for quick date-checks from time to time. And wouldn't it be great if you had one that was pre-loaded with all of the kids entertainment industry's most important markets and events?

We've got it covered! KidScreen is planning an annual calendar that will be sent to our 10,000-plus subscribers with the January 2011 issue. And we're looking for companies to brand each month of this handy reference tool. Book now to put your stamp on the big-market months people will be flipping to frequently!

Call 416-408-2300 or email sales@kidscreen.com to find out more about these opportunities.

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SABAN TO MAKE POWER RANGERS MIGHTY ONCE MORE

by gary rusak

The story is well known. In 1993, after numerous rejections, entrepreneur Haim Saban brought his Japanese concept for a kid-targeted action-packed soap opera to then fledgling net Fox Kids. The show, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, became an instant hit and pop culture phenomenon, and was ultimately sold, along with Fox Family Worldwide, to Disney in 2001. So it seems things have come full circle, as the first property handpicked for representation by new licensing venture Saban Brands is none other than the spandex-sporting superhero series, repurchased from Disney for a reported US\$100 million in mid-May.

To date, a full 700 half-hour eps, two theatrical films and an estimated US\$5 billion in consumer products sales surround Power Rangers. But the IP has slipped from public consciousness, thanks to reduced visibility both on TV screens and retail shelves. So the question now is how is Saban going to breathe new life into the flagging property.

Saban Brands would not confirm or deny the purchase price of the Power Rangers, but it is believed the company is operating with an estimated US\$500-million bankroll with the express intent to acquire and manage more IPs. "Obviously, Power Rangers is a very natural first brand for us," says Elie Dekel, CEO of Saban Brands, who last year left his post as EVP of licensing and merchandising at Twentieth Century Fox to take the job.

Dekel also had a hand in managing the original Power Rangers' rollout in the early '90s. "We want to return it to its glory," he says. And to do that, re-runs of the original series will move from their current once-a-week spot on Disney's ABC Family to a daily slot on Nicktoons US this fall. In addition, Saban has enlisted original executive producer Jonathan Tzachor to start production on 20 new episodes that will bow on Nickelodeon proper starting in Q1 2011.

"We are immediately going into production," says Dekel. "We are ramping up to produce new episodes indefinitely."

On the management level, Dekel will be joined by a newly appointed trio of execs, including longtime Disney Consumer Products VP of retail development and licensing Nina Leong as Saban's new SVP of licensing. As well, David Shuman, who previously served as a VP of finance for the North American divisions of Live Nation, has been named VP finance. Rami Yanni is now SVP of legal and business affairs.

And with the *Power Rangers* back on air everyday, Saban Brands will be focusing on crafting an extensive licensing program. While still in the midst of evaluating existing licensing agreements around the world, longstanding partner Tokyo-based Namco

"Power Rangers" continued on page 12

Roll the Cartoon

by jim benton



THE ONLY RELIABLE WAY TO
SELECT A GOOD LICENSE.

It's true that it's impossible to predict where the next big property will come from, but checking out our Licensing Show preview (page 46) might provide a few leads.

The Hub builds first sked, sells upfront

New on the kids broadcast scene this advertising upfront season, Discovery Kids/Hasbro joint-venture The Hub has been busy lining up its programming slate and online repertoire for its planned October 10th launch into 60 million US homes. And in addition to the usual brand-building a nascent network engages in while trying to lure ad support, The Hub has spent a considerable amount of energy convincing potential toy advertisers—the largest single ad category in the kids space—that buying exposure on the channel won't be the same as supporting a rival Hasbro channel.

"Our initial meetings with several of the large toy companies were understandably challenging," says The Hub CEO and president Margaret Loesch. "They had a preconceived notion, I think stoked by the competition, that we are the Hasbro toy channel." Since then, Loesch says her succession of one-on-one upfront meetings has managed to adjust the misconception. She says about 75% of the net's content will not be based on Hasbro brands, and adds that while Hasbro is advertising on the channel, it will pay the same rates as other companies. "We can't succeed if we rely on one company to provide advertising and programming," says Loesch.

To that end, The Hub has announced several original and acquired live-action and animated series and specials. Hub original series include: *Dan Vs.* (Film Roman in association with The Hatchery); *R.L. Stine's The Haunting Hour* (The Hatchery), based on the spooky novel series of the same name; and *The 99*, (Teshkeel Media & Endemol Digital UK Production Group), also based on a comic book series.



Hasbro-produced content, like new series *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*, will make up just 25% of The Hub's launch schedule when the net goes live in October

The Hub has also made a number of international acquisitions that will get their US debut, including *Animal Mechanicals* (Halifax Films), *Cosmic Quantum Ray* (Moonscoop), *Deltora Quest* (Dentsu Entertainment USA), *Fraggle Rock* (The Jim Henson Company), *Maryoku Yummy* (American Greetings Properties and DQ Entertainment, in association with Telegael), *Meerkat Manor* (Oxford Scientific Films), *Strawberry Shortcake* (American Greetings Properties), *The WotWots* (Pukeko Pictures) and *Twisted Whiskers* (American Greetings Properties, co-produced with DQ Entertainment and Moonscoop). Also on the programming sked is Family Movie Night that will show a yet-to-be-finalized list of popular family movies.

These shows join the channel's inevitable lineup of Hasbro-branded shows from newly founded Hasbro Studios. *Family Game Night* is a live-action, original game show in which kids and adults play a variety of Hasbro games like Cranium, Bop-It and Connect4, while established Hasbro toys get the series treatment in the form of *G.I. Joe Renegades*,

Pound Puppies, *Transformers Prime* and *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*.

The new kidnet's dayparts are being split up into a preschool block (ages two to 5) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., kids afternoon/kids prime (ages six to 12) from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., family prime access from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and family prime from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

"From an advertiser's perspective, a new network is beneficial because we can offer prices that bigger and more established networks are not prone to do," says Loesch. She says her sales team is selling around two key demos. The preschool block will offer advertising for moms or caregivers with young kids, the afternoon block will target kids six to 12, and the prime time slot will also advertise to families with young children, but with a slightly broader reach. Besides toy companies, Loesch says the sales team has been meeting with several categories of advertisers, including food, gifts and apparel manufacturers. **KC**

LINKS

The Hub >

www.the-hub.tv

"Power Rangers" continued from page 11

Bandai has announced it's retaining global master toy and video game rights for the brand.

Bandai intends to roll out new and expanded Power Rangers lines in 2011, and Dekel says his next priority is to establish a coherent publishing program, followed by apparel and social expressions.

While a new style guide is being formulated, the property's core look and content won't be changing too much. "Kids evolve and we want to make sure it's relevant to the world they live in," says Dekel. "But we are still going to have all of those ingredients that make Power Rangers so special."

Saban Brands will be debuting its new vision for the brand at Licensing Show this month and Brand Licensing in London this fall. Additionally, Dekel says the firm is working on "three other potential transactions" with a keen eye on acquiring kids IPs as well as fashion and design properties.

"We are interested in other kids brands," says Dekel. "We are identifying brands that are authentic and have a resonance and consumer appeal that we think can benefit from a new strategy and almost bottomless resources." **N**

LINKS

Saban Brands >

www.saban.com



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Griptonite extends storytelling with book-based video games

by emily claire afan

While it's not uncommon for film and TV properties to make the leap to the video game world, publishing IPs also possess a wealth of digital potential worth exploring. Just ask Kirkland, Washington-based Griptonite Games.

Lately, the 10-year-old studio has been working with book licenses beyond those translated to film that then make the move into video games, like the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings franchises, for example. To that end, Griptonite recently teamed up with game publisher THQ to develop titles based on New York Times bestselling author James Patterson's *Women's Murder Club* and, for the younger set, his *The Dangerous Days of Daniel X* for the Nintendo DS.

"There's more creative leeway with a book," notes studio head JC Connors. "You don't have imagery from the movie or a previous game, so our artists absolutely love it. For *Daniel X*, we got to invent what some of the characters and locations looked like," he says. "Patterson was even open to expanding the fiction in ways that movie studios haven't traditionally been comfortable with," adds Connors.

For instance, Connors and his team sent *Daniel X* into space and created a sci-fi environment complete with an alien complex—a plot point that hadn't been pursued in any of Patterson's books. With notes and suggestions from the author made during the process, Griptonite created a whole new setting and villain, even exploring the villain's history, but all the while staying true to *Daniel X*'s character.



The digital studio got creative buy-in from Maurice Sendak to take the *Where the Wild Things Are* video game into territory unexplored in both the 2009 film and classic book

The process was similar for Griptonite's *Where The Wild Things Are* title, for which the company collaborated quite closely with the author Maurice Sendak and the film's director Spike Jonze to achieve the "little bit creepy, but weird vibe" of the game. "[Jonze and Sendak] wanted to make sure everything was grounded in the idea of leaving childhood behind, but taking parts of it with you. They worked with us on the plot, some of the dialogue and the overall feel."

And the *Wild Things* game wasn't just a retelling of the story that players already know. Connors says this particular title diverged more from its source material than other projects he's tackled. In the game, the island of the Wild Things is under attack, so Max and the creatures must build a bridge to the moon to escape. "For a long time, we were encouraged to follow the movie or book's plot in lockstep," he states. "I think now there's been a lot more creative freedom allowed and encouraged, and we love that."

At press time, Griptonite was wrapping up work for titles based on *Iron Man 2* and *Shrek Forever After*, and Connors was keen on exploring the possibilities for Microsoft's controller-free Project Natal. **N**

LINKS

Griptonite >

www.griptonite.com

Now Playing

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CEO of Big Tent Entertainment

The Good Times Are Killing Me

(Modest Mouse)

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3:27

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- ◆ Disney's "Pass the Plate" mission and game-changing institution of nutrition guidelines for all branded food products and promotions
- ◆ **ALL THREE** are partners in Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign

And when you look at current schedules, you find... *LazyTown* (Nick), *The Backyardigans* (Nick), *The Fresh Beat Band* (Nick), *Yo Gabba Gabba!* (Nick), *Imagination Movers* (Disney), *Big Cook Little Cook* (CBeebies), *I Can Cook* (CBeebies).

Clearly there's a healthy market demand for shows that encourage kids to be more active and eat well. And we want buyers to see that there's a lot more of them out there! So in this special sponsored supplement of KidScreen's July/August issue, we'll be featuring TV content that aims to inspire generation next to make responsible choices about their fitness and diet.

Clients that book into **Fit for Viewing** will be interviewed to help shape the magazine feature with their perspectives and projects, and the supplement will also be emailed as an iMag (with live links to advertisers' websites) to the **800-plus broadcast execs** who subscribe to KidScreen.

SO THEY'LL BE READING IT AS THEY GEAR UP FOR THE FALL MARKETS!

For more info, contact the **KidScreen Sales Team** today at sales@kidscreen.com, and make sure you get the profile you deserve for helping kids around the world lead healthier lives.

DEADLINES

BOOKING: JUNE 18 • INTERVIEWS COMPLETED: JULY 2
ADS DUE: JULY 9 IMAG DATE: JULY 20 • ISSUE STREET DATE: JULY 23

Paddington got a second life by going digital



by kate calder

BACK-CATALOGUE BONUS

Conversion to digital makes the most of content libraries and eases delivery

files and the capital investment already poured into the creation of large analogue-tape facilities has kept the industry's conversion to digital at bay. That said, a few players in the kids industry are starting to take advantage of the newer format, edging the market closer to an all-digital existence.

Three-year-old international children's channel KidsCo, based in London, is one company that instituted a digital workflow right from its inception. "We're a small business, so for us, the cost of tape as a proportion of our total costs would be much higher than an established business," explains MD Paul Robinson.

In 2007, KidsCo teamed up with London-based digital media company JCA TV to set up a virtual delivery system and convert older series on tape into digital files. KidsCo broadcasts children's programming in 84 territories and 18 languages via satellite transmission centers in Denver, Colorado and Tel Aviv, Israel. And

Thanks to the onset of streaming video, favored content is but a mouse click away for most kids—digital delivery is now easy and instantaneous. So, it would only make sense if behind-the-scenes content delivery from distributor to broadcaster mirrored the consumer experience. However, particularly when it comes to older content, a reluctance to relinquish hard-copy

the company's thousands of hours of now-digitized content sit at JCA's office in West London.

"The transmission centers could be on the moon, because if we want to get a show to Sydney, we can send it from JCA, and it will arrive in 10 minutes, and the cost is nothing," says Robinson. Though KidsCo is growing its lineup of newly produced first-run acquisitions and original content, which are digital from the get-go, the bulk of its programming is derived from older series featuring evergreen properties such as Paddington Bear and Danger Mouse. As well, Robinson says between 65% and 75% of the programs are the same in every market. "When you've got fantastic content libraries and you digitize them, your ability to use them for channels massively increases because you can get that content around the world," he says.

KidsCo went as far as to re-package the almost 30-year-old *Danger Mouse* with fresh promos and new positioning to introduce the series to a new generation of kids. "That's a show that has been leveraged for us because we've created a digital version of it," explains Robinson.

JCA's Simon Kay says the majority of distributors have a lot of back-catalogue content and they don't seem to be pushing to make it more widely available. "If they even put their content up on the web, it's available and people see it more easily," he says.

Kay admits that turning master tapes into digital file formats, which many fear may be obsolete in a few years, is a major concern for content owners. So why convert when it's conceivable

"Digital conversion" continued on page 23

Preschool series *Driver Dan's Story Train* is twofour54's first production



twofour54 spearheads Arabic toon industry, attracts Cartoon Network

Having just celebrated its first anniversary, Abu Dhabi-based media company twofour54 is aiming to establish a local animation industry from the ground up, complete with homegrown talent, formidable production studios and Arabic content with international sales and distribution legs. The initiative spurred by the government of Abu Dhabi, and named after the geographical coordinates of the city, is part of a long-term plan to diversify the economy of the United Arab Emirates. The goal is to establish the territory as a self-sustaining Arabic production center for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

"The essence of everything we're doing here is about sustainability," says Wayne Borg, twofour54's CEO. He explains that rather than working with organizations on a project-by-project basis, the bigger goal is to develop content businesses with steady output over time, rather than one-off properties. And although the organization is getting government funding and support, he says it's very cognizant of not becoming too dependent on subsidies. "We're focused on facilitating businesses to establish themselves in Abu Dhabi."

Since its inception, twofour54 has had a presence at international sales markets to spread awareness of production opportunities in MENA, especially for kids content. Borg says the region has roughly 100 million children between the ages of six and 10. "Given the size of the population, there should be hundreds of kids IPs," says Borg, explaining that to date there hasn't been the platform or the framework to allow young and aspiring creators to develop that content. (At press time, the company was in the process of hiring an executive to head up its kids content development, and Borg was keeping tight-lipped on three animated projects currently in the hopper.)

Twofour54, however, does have one series up and away—52 x 11-minute mixed-media preschool series *Driver Dan's Story Train*, co-produced with UK-based 3Line Media. Created by British author and illustrator Rebecca Elgar, the educational series stars animated characters who introduce young viewers to reading by exploring a storybook in each ep. Borg says the series—which launched on CBeebies earlier this year and has since moved from its original weekend

slot to prime story time on weekdays at 6 p.m.—made ground at MIPTV this past April with a sale to ABC Australia.

Now the series is in the process of being re-imagined and re-voiced in Arabic, including sourcing and producing original stories written by Arabian authors. *Driver Dan* was constructed from the outset to permit formatting, making localization easy. And instead of re-formatting or dubbing into Arabic, twofour54 is producing live-action footage of real kids responding to and acting out the stories. Borg says the goal down the road is to reverse the process and produce Arabic content that originates in the region and is then re-versioned or formatted for export to other territories worldwide.

Cartoon Network on-board

The company also used the spring market to announce a partnership with Turner Broadcasting System International/Cartoon Network that will see the channel open an animation academy with twofour54 in Abu Dhabi. The academy launches this September and will work closely with twofour54's own media and entertainment training center that's already

"twofour54" continued on page 23



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Zooper Troopers from Banzai and TAG



Sardine's Mia

The animals that came in from the cold

Argentina's Banzai Films has teamed up with TAG (The Adkins Group) in New York to co-produce *Zooper Troopers*, a wacky 2-D animated series about a team of outlandish animal spies that gets sent to the concrete jungle to fight a group of mutant monsters plotting to take over the world. Targeted at kids six to 12, slapstick comedy abounds as unsuspecting humans putter around the city, clueless to the dangers that lurk in every corner. Thankfully three special agents—a chameleon, a tapir and a piranha working undercover as everyday zoo animals—sneak out regularly to perform top-secret missions and scupper the plans of their foes.

Chameleon Speet is a martial arts expert with a telescopic tongue that comes in handy on many occasions. Bongo the tapir is a little clumsy, but uses his brute strength to save the day, and the leader and brains of the group, Hugo the piranha, can chew through almost anything. Wading through the sewers of the city, the good guys find themselves locked in combat with evil genius guinea pig Titus, zombie cyber monkeys, a gargantuan gator, an enormous scheming cockroach and a ninja rat.

TAG is overseeing distribution and production of the series, in conjunction with its Indian animation arm, Land Marvel Animations, and is working with budget of US\$3 million for the project. Banzai, meanwhile, will shoulder pre- and post-production work. Delivery for the first 13 x 22-minute episodes is scheduled for fall 2010. At press time, TAG was keeping tight-lipped on broadcast deals. MD Rose Adkins says TAG will be on the lookout for more presales at Annecy this month and MIPCOM in the fall.

A multiplatform mouse in the house

Montreal, Canada-based Sardine Productions' new 52 x 11-minute CGI series, *Mia*, for kids four to six, stars an inquisitive little mouse who moves into the attic space of an abandoned Victorian house with her grandmother. Every day sparks an adventure for the curious and fearless rodent, who makes it a personal quest to collect ordinary items that she finds significant from her surroundings. It isn't long before Mia and Grams meet and befriend other inhabitants of the house, including fellow mouse Marty, who quickly becomes Mia's brainy best friend. On the first floor, under the stairs, there's a general store run by Maurice the mouse, while frogs Jet and Freddy live in the pond outside, and a trio of chipmunks inhabits the big tree in the backyard. An elevator in the laundry shoot and a series of ropes for scaling walls help the mini-society of squatters get around the house. And cleverly employed household items, such as a tea bag mattress and a bottle cap stool for sitting, furnish Mia and Gram's home.

Sardine developed the series with Société Radio Canada and is working with a preliminary budget of US\$250,000 per half hour, aiming for a fall 2011 delivery. *Mia* is based on a PC game created by Montreal-based software manufacturer Kutoka Interactive. Planned multi-media brand extensions include an online kids play space with multiplayer games and downloadable goodies, console games, educational books and smart toys. **KC**

LINKS

• Banzai Films >	www.banzaifilms.comtv
• Sardine Productions >	www.sardineproductions.com
• TAG >	www.tagstudios.tv

ANYONE

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GREEN
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SUMMER 2011



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Dentsu gives legs to US arm

Japanese ad firm and animation giant Dentsu is rebranding its US subsidiary with an aim to expand its global reach and bring a Western sensibility to its productions. To make the transition, two-year-old DCI Los Angeles has been rechristened Dentsu Entertainment USA. The subsidiary is charged with developing original animation and media content, as well as growing consumer products opportunities for existing and new properties.

"They've bought us a real pot to allow us to grow and establish some roots," says SVP of global strategy and development Marc Harrington, describing the rebrand. He adds that Dentsu set DCI LA up as a test group after it sold the bulk of its stake in anime company Geneon to Universal in 2008.

Fuelling Dentsu Entertainment's growth is *Monsumo*, a 52 x half-hour animated series for boys being developed with toyco Jakks Pacific. It's scheduled to launch in 2011 in North America, Europe and Asia, with a simultaneous rollout of Jakks-produced toys and other consumer products from yet-to-be-announced licensees. (The IP is managed through a joint-venture between Dentsu and Jakks.)

"As we develop with Jakks Pacific, we're pushing the envelope

as to what is a traditional Japanese look," says Harrington. The goal is to merge Western writing with a Japanese aesthetic that will sell internationally and still work on key Japanese broadcasters like TV Tokyo.

In addition, the L.A. division has just signed a US deal with The Hub to air *Deltora Quest*, a series already on air in Asia and based on a fantasy-adventure book series of the same name.

Dentsu Entertainment USA is also taking on third-party properties—including *Chub City*, a series in development that's based on the toy line of street-savvy figurines and vehicles produced by Jada Toys; and bean-dog toy line Mameshiba, which debuted in Japan in 2008. Consumer products related to the canine IP generated US\$55 million at international retail last year.

The US arm also has a few original Western-flavored shows in development with Dentsu Japan. Harrington says the company is looking to go beyond its "export model" of merely dubbing Japanese series, and will be collaborating to get more input from the West. To that end, he expects to work up concepts and bibles State-side as well as collaborate with other Western producers down the road. **KC**

LINKS

Dentsu >

www.dentsu.com

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"Digital conversion" continued from page 17

that it will have to be done all over again in the not-so-distant future? Kay contends he works with every client individually to future-proof the move. "Once you go down that route, as long as you've got the asset management side that you can build around, you can move the business forward in an easier way."

Platform to platform

Robinson says dealing exclusively with digital also dovetails nicely with delivering VOD content over FTP sites as well as sending content to digital mobile networks with little to no cost. Last November, JCA teamed up with Bristol, England's Aardman Animations to package and deliver its short films to iTunes. In the same month, London-based distribution company Cake Entertainment launched a delivery portal with JCA, which will allow it to send series and content directly to iTunes, broadcasters and other partners.


Cake partner and commercial director Genevieve Dexter says she expects the new system to eventually reduce overall hard costs by 5%. Part of that savings comes with eliminating the need to produce and ship DVDs to buyers. Plus, uploading files to the portal allows the entire market to see programs and new eps hot off the production line. Buyers are able to screen content ahead of markets and the company is able to control exactly who sees what eps. Dexter says that makes the viewing process completely transparent. For better or for worse, now Cake can see who has viewed which eps and who, perhaps, said they would take a gander, but didn't actually get around to it.

Cake has experienced another benefit of digital files in its dealings with emerging markets. Dexter says hard copies sent to territories with tight customs restrictions often don't make it to their destinations. Russia, for example, is an emerging market with physical delivery problems but very open to receiving digital files through an online delivery mechanism.

Down the line, Dexter says she'll be investigating ways to automate the process for buying programs online. She admits that license fee structures, which vary so much from platform to



Thanks to digital conversion, KidsCo was able to repackage 30-year-old *Danger Mouse* with fresh on-air promos and introduce the series to a new generation of kids

platform, will be a challenge to navigate. But streamlining and automating the demand for content on VOD provides motivation to set up an automated licensing system for those platforms. "We could license directly to VOD platforms in a way that's economical, without having to hire an army of people to handle the paperwork," says Dexter. 

LINKS

• Cake Entertainment >	www.cakeentertainment.com
• JCA >	www.jca.tv
• KidsCo >	www.kidscotv.tv

"twofour54" continued from page 18

been established. Cartoon Network's master classes are set to complement twofour54's curriculum, and CN will offer internships at its international studios.

As well, CN is cutting the ribbon on a new animation development studio to test out series ideas with network development execs before taking the best Arabic concepts through to production. And then in 2011, the final phase of the partnership will see the opening of a local Cartoon Network production studio, where the ideas will go from concepts to viable commercial Arabic animated series.

"Cartoon recognized that audiences are looking for more content that reflects their society and culture," says Borg, contending the trend found its seed in the movie industry. Film studios seem to be recognizing the need to connect more with markets that gravitate towards local fare, such as Japan and Korea, where more than 50% of the feature films screened are locally produced.

"[CN] approached us with a view to aligning with what we're trying to achieve here in building a creative hub in the region," says Borg.

Besides Cartoon Network, twofour54 has more than 60 regional and international partners, and in 2009 took 800 media professionals from 27 companies through courses at its own training academy. The company's eight-month-old production facility has more than 70 staff, HD studios, 22 post-production suites and has produced more than 400 hours of TV programming to date. **KC**

LINKS

• Cartoon Network >	www.cartoonnetwork.com
• Twofour54 >	www.twofour54.com

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SOME KIND OF WONDER!

NEW US KIDS RETAIL CONCEPT TAKES SHAPE

by gary rusak

Wonder! looks to combine the best aspects of big-box shopping and specialty retail

What lies between impersonal but highly efficient big-box stores and quality-conscious yet logistically confined specialty stores with high operating costs in the kids retail space in North America? The question is one that vexed Lake Forest, Illinois-based venture capitalist Shane Christensen as he started surveying the kid-

oriented retail landscape a few years back. But he thinks he's found the answer in Wonder!—a new kids retail superstore that will combine the most appealing aspects of big-box stores and their specialty counterparts. Christensen is aiming to open the first location of a planned Wonder! chain in Deerfield, Illinois, which sits on the outskirts of Chicago, in November.

Owing to its particularly wealthy and broad-based demographic, Deerfield is well-known as a good test market for new US retail concepts, and the 135,000-square-foot outlet (an advantageous lease was secured thanks to the downturn in the retail real estate market) will include a dedicated 22,000-square-foot play area, 30-foot ceilings and a philosophy that is meant to cater to parents as much as children. With parents in mind, in fact, the focus will be on creating a one-stop shop, offering busy moms and dads a full-service bakery, seasonal farmer's markets, a drugstore and kids products under one aesthetically pleasing roof.

"The ambience is going to be drastically different," says Christensen. "It's our belief that you don't need the primary colors and the children's music. Wonder! will have an authentic earth-toned look geared towards parents." Other parent-friendly aspects

include mobile point-of-sale capabilities, 250 underground parking spots and easy garage-to-store access.


The strategy also includes taking a different approach to staffing the outlet. Wonder! intends to pay staff more than its competitors to draw a higher calibre of employee and engender better customer service. "Accordingly, these people are going to care about what they are doing, not just working the job for the summer," says Christensen. The initial plan is to have approximately 150 employees in the first location, including head office support staff.

The business plan has already attracted at least one retail heavyweight in Bill Colaanni, former EVP and chief marketing and merchandising officer of the Central American division of Walmart. After tendering his resignation to the world's largest retailer last September, Colaanni joined Wonder! as its CEO and is currently busy employing his merchandising expertise to fill up the new superstore.

With shelf space a-plenty, expect Wonder! to stock all the usual suspects in terms of national kids brands, but to also complement the offerings with many diverse niche items. "The boutique and specialty market is thrilled so far," says Christensen. "They are used to filling small orders and we are talking about much bigger numbers...our merchandising team is aggressively putting together our plan right now."

The long-term strategy is to roll out 19 locations in major centers across the US over the next five years with an end goal of more than 150 if all goes well.

"Every time a parent comes into our store, we want them to walk out with a smile," he says.

"We are going to build this brand as a destination." 

LINKS

Wonder! >

www.wonderwarehouse.com

Spare the shovel

Kids DVDs continue to show signs of life at North American retail

Back in May 1897, Mark Twain stated infamously, "The report of my death is an exaggeration." He notably went on to live another 13 years. And the children's home entertainment market could arguably make the same assertion right now. There's still life in the consumer products category yet. According to The Digital Entertainment Group, the entire US DVD market in 2009 was worth just shy of US\$17 billion, with kids sales estimated to represent about one-third of that total. And according to industry tracker Videoscan, in the midst of the recession, the children's DVD market actually enjoyed a 3% sales increase in 2009 over 2008, while sales of non-kids DVDs fell between 6% and 8%.

Price-point and expanded distribution

A dogged pursuit of new retail channels by North American distributors and pocket-friendly price-points seem to be maintaining sales at a time when Walmart, the largest DVD seller in the territory, is cutting back on floor space for the product.

"It is definitely holding its own in a challenging marketplace," says Debbie Ries, SVP and GM of NCircle Entertainment. The Dallas, Texas-based company counts TV series *Sid the Science Kid*, *WordWorld* and direct-to-video series *Mighty Machines* as part of its distribution catalogue. "There are a number of things that make kids DVDs a good value proposition," she adds. "DVDs are portable, there is an educational component, and kids like to watch them over and over."

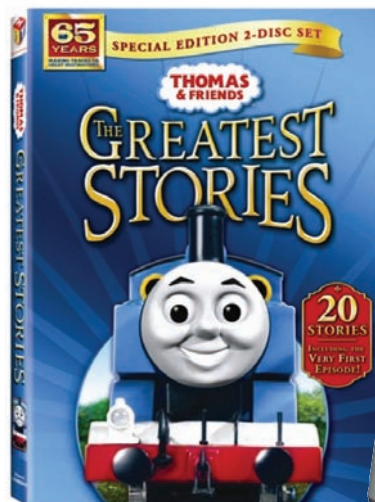
Barry Meyerowitz, president and CEO of Toronto, Canada-based home entertainment company Phase 4 Films notes, "Family content is our sweet spot" and counts broadcaster-branded Treehouse, Teletoon and YTV video compilations as some of the company's stronger titles. "We tell retailers that consumer appetite has not been diminished—we are still giving consumers what they want so they can watch it when they want and how they want."

Moreover, the current price-point and value proposition offered by DVDs is keeping the medium competitive with digital distribution modes like VOD, video streaming and digital downloading.

"The price-point has become friendlier," says Ries, adding NCircle strives to keep SRPs between US\$10 and US\$15. And Meyerowitz says impulse-buy DVDs that sit at prices under US\$10 apiece are helping to keep the format alive and well. "For quality programming, I think parents see the value in paying between US\$10 and US\$20," he says.

Phase 4 has recently endeavored to strategically place its Nelvana back-catalogue content at lower price-points and emphasize its wholesomeness on the packaging. The family-friendly discounted fare is being distributed to mass retailers like Walmart and smaller discount outlets like Dollar General and giving the content US exposure that it hadn't enjoyed previously.

The lower price-point and general retail pressures have also forced many distributors to look beyond their traditional channels.



Price-point and packaging innovations are helping maintain kids DVD sales at a time when most market segments are in decline

The expansion is another reason why kids DVDs have maintained their market share in a tough climate.

"We have gone into drug stores and places you wouldn't think to find DVDs like Home Depot," says Ries. "We put our Mighty Machines line in a tractor supply chain and did really well with it," she says, adding it's not NCircle's policy to release sales data. Last year, the company even matched up Cookie Jar's equestrian-themed girls series *Horseland* with Tyler, Texas-based western apparel chain Cavenders, which has 42 locations.

Packaging strategy

The pressure on retail has also forced distributors to innovate in terms of packaging and putting together combo packs. The inclusion of add-ons like plush and publishing products has been the go-to value-add strategy over the past decade, but the extra cost and retail space requirements associated with those types of promos are pushing them out of favor with retailers. "Right now because of the retail space situation, we are looking to find an item that adds value but doesn't take up too much more shelf space," says Michael Rathauer, SVP of marketing for Lionsgate Home Entertainment.

Rathauer offers up Lionsgate's three-DVD on-the-go carrying case format it's using to spotlight HIT Entertainment's Barney and Thomas & Friends series. The new on-the-go DVD Packs for Thomas feature three DVDs and a reusable carrying case. The pack also has room to hold an additional nine DVDs and retails for US\$19.98. The packs are being shipped to mass retail and can be merchandised alongside other children's DVD titles.



"Combo packs combining Blu-ray and standard DVDs are also a very good transitional opportunity," says Rathauer. Meyerowitz, too, sees the inherent value in such an offering, particularly for family-oriented entertainment, where it's likely that moms and dads will want to watch the content on their HD TVs.

Phase 4, for example, is readying the release of direct-to-DVD feature *The Missing Lynx*, produced by Antonio Banderas. The full-length CGI feature tells the story of animals fleeing a modern-day Noah's Ark, and was co-directed by former Pixar, Disney and DreamWorks animators. The film will be a one-SKU item and feature standard DVD and Blu-ray discs with a digital download for between US\$15 and US\$18, depending on the retailer.

"We have seen the studios doing nifty things and that was what we were going for," says Meyerowitz. "With that kind of three-in-one pack, we think consumers see the value." The concept has also received good retail support. "We have seen tremendous results with that," he says.

The most obvious example of the concept being a winner is the recent *Avatar* Blu-ray/DVD combo-pack priced at US\$20 that jumped off retail shelves to the tune of 6.7 million units in the first four days after its retail release.

Not so fast, Blu-ray

Blu-ray, however, is not as enticing a value proposition when it comes to content meant for kids' eyes only. In the recent history of technological shifts in the home video industry, pure kids content, particularly preschool, has traditionally been the segment that's lagged behind the curve. "I used to say that the last VHS tape ever sold would be a *Sesame Street* one," says Scott Chambers, Sesame Workshop VP and GM of worldwide media distribution.

It's understandable, given that preschoolers can't access iTunes on their own and they are often the recipients of hand-me-down technology from their parents. This is one reason many experts say Blu-ray is still years away from making a big impact in the pure kids market, where standard-definition DVDs are still king.

"It's just more expensive and I don't really see the benefit," says Ries. Meyerowitz agrees and doesn't envision Blu-ray being a major player in the kids market over the next couple of years. "It's a last mover just like with VHS," he says. "Right now kids are less particular and don't need to watch the latest, greatest HD Blu-ray. It's really more about them becoming attached to the content and being able to watch it over and over."

Chambers says that Blu-ray is not a high priority for Sesame's 129 titles. "HD content will be what everybody watches but just not right now."

While the introduction of Blu-ray has played a part in sustaining, and perhaps re-invigorating, the home media market for adults, the fact that parents can still pick up reasonably priced DVDs and don't feel the pressure to repurchase content they already own in a new format has also helped sustain the kids DVD market in its current state.

One interesting aspect that might usher in the kids Blu-ray era is a new feature known as BD Live. The technology allows Blu-ray discs to link into a central server that can then upload new and fresh content in real time to players.

"We're bullish on it," says James Malliaros, SVP of sales at Universal Studios Canada. "We are going to be getting the message to consumers that this is much more than just a movie. There are enhanced features that will really extend interactivity."

Currently, the tech is being rolled out in some mainstream feature films, but has not garnered a heavy user base. However, it is something to keep in mind as a possible driver of kids content onto the Blu-ray format.

Not dimming...yet

Although reports of Twain's death weren't true at the time, Mr. Clemens did eventually succumb. And it's pretty much a given that the standard DVD market will go the way of the Dodo five to 10 years from now.

"Do we have decades left? Probably not," says Chambers. "In five years you can bet the market will look a lot different." Malliaros agrees. "We are living in a very profound period of change," he says. "Those who embrace the change and resource their organizations accordingly will do alright. I personally believe there is going to be room for all facets of media consumption: digital, physical, online. It's all going to be there."

Meyerowitz says Phase 4 will continue to mine the kids DVD market for the foreseeable future, and is optimistic that his business will keep up as the means of media consumption evolve. "Right now DVD's are far too big for retailers to just let slip," he says. "I envision kiosks where you can download content onto any number of devices, but that's still a ways away." **GR**

LINKS

• Lionsgate >	www.lionsgate.com
• NCircle Entertainment >	www.ncircleentertainment.com
• Phase 4 Films >	www.phase4films.com
• Sesame Workshop >	www.sesameworkshop.org
• Universal Studios Canada >	www.universalstudios.com

No network, no problem

Discovery Kids brand revamps, sets course for CP growth

With just six licensees on its roster, the consumer products program for Discovery Kids, led by its New York-based licensing agent Big Tent Entertainment, generated approximately US\$83 million at retail last year and is on track to break the US\$100-million mark in 2010.

In the midst of a major revamp of the brand, Big Tent CMO Rich Maryyanek is bullish on the future of the Discovery Kids licensing prospects, despite the fact that Discovery Kids will cease operating as a TV network in the US this fall. "From our perspective it's not a negative," says Maryyanek, referring to the impending absence of a dedicated TV channel. "We never really discussed the network with retailers and potential partners—we didn't tie the products to the network's theme or the shows themselves."

It's a point of view that is echoed by one of the brand's most prolific licensees, New York's Parragon Publishing. With more than 70 Discovery Kids titles distributed at all tiers of retail across the US, VP of new business development at Parragon Venetia Davie says she is not at all concerned that the network is going off the air. "What has been important is the strength of the Discovery brand itself," she says. "Our line is reflective of that, not the kids network."

Discovery Kids has undergone an evolution in the past year. By stressing outdoor activity, nature and science, the style guide has been updated to emphasize an active brand with global scope represented by the Earth in the logo. One of the key entertainment platforms moving forward is the Discovery Kids website, which is being bolstered by a closer link with parent brand, Discovery. DiscoveryKids.com currently roughly 719,000 unique monthly visitors, while Discovery.com gets 5.6 million. Creating a stronger connection between the adult and kids sites by giving a higher profile to the Discovery Kids weblink and adding more content to the kids portal is part of Big Tent's and Discovery's goal of making the website the centerpiece of a reinvigorated program.

"Online is a key hub for us," says Maryyanek. "Online content will be changing. We are going to add games and videos, and its gaming portal is a key initiative." Accordingly, DiscoveryKids.com is relaunching this fall, and will include proprietary title *Seek Your Own Proof*, created by Canadian prodco Hotrocket Studios, which won KidScreen Summit's 2007 Pitch It! competition with the concept. For his part, Maryyanek believes it might just "revolutionize interactive kids entertainment."

The game lets players solve online mysteries by participating in real-world activities like visiting the local museum and library. Players assume the role of a secret agent and solve puzzles, riddles and mysteries from the clues provided. One of the missions requires players to use The Pigpen Cipher, an 18th-century code, to track the movements of mega-bad guy Keymaker.

"We know kids are online, but it has always been our goal to get them out into the real world," Maryyanek says. A segment of



With just six licensees, Discovery Kids product brought in US\$83 million at US retail in '09

Seek Your Own Proof will be free to users, but the game will employ a pay model for full access—US\$19.95 for an all-season subscription/pass (10 missions) or US\$3.95 per mission.

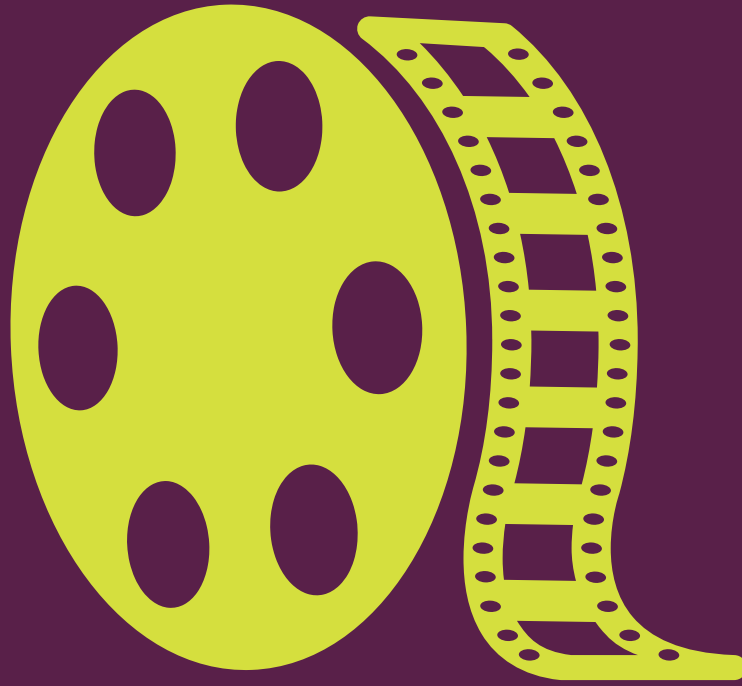
On the licensing side of the equation, Big Tent is looking to expand its Discovery Kids licensee roster that currently includes master toy partner Jakks Pacific, 505 Games for Nintendo DS games, Parragon and electronics from Merch. "We are looking for partners for platform-based video games, electronics and computer peripherals," says Maryyanek, adding that partners in RC toys, room décor and furniture categories are also on his wish list.

As with any program, getting the merch onto retail shelves is often the trickiest part, but Maryyanek is convinced that the strength of the Discovery brand, and Discovery Kids by association, will open many doors as the licensing lineup grows. "It's always a challenge at retail," he says. "But, at the same time, the brand gets the conversation started right away. We're relatively blessed with a pretty wide marketplace and strong commitments." **GR**

LINKS

- Big Tent Entertainment > www.bigtent.tv
- Discovery Kids > www.discoverykids.com

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*Source: Global Animation Industry: Strategies, Trends and Opportunities –2009, Animation Age Ghetto –www.tvtropes.com.

Ones to watch

First-time licensees get into the kids market

Licensors on the lookout for new product applications should spend five minutes right here. In recent months we've come across a crop of first-time licensees from various parts of the globe, taking kids IPs where they haven't gone before. Read on for the round-up.

First on deck is the company, F.T. Ross a privately owned Canadian firm based just outside of Toronto that manufacturers environmentally friendly household products, entered the world of kids entertainment licensing for the first time as the result of a personal relationship between its CEO Bernie Ross and Doug Murphy, president of Corus Television.

The pair was casually discussing their respective businesses when their philosophical common ground became hard to ignore. Within six months of the first discussion, F.T. Ross created a new range of Treehouse-branded products, featuring characters like The Backyardigans and Max & Ruby, which are seen on the 24/7 preschool net owned by Corus. Eco-friendly 2-in-1 shampoo, body wash, bubble bath, hair detangler, body lotion and foaming hand soap were all part of the initial run of products that launched at Canadian mass and specialty retail this spring.

"Treehouse is a trusted safe-place for parents," says Ilisa Chacon, director of marketing at F.T. Ross. "It's the same for us. We are 100% devoted to children as well. We believe our products are in the same way gentle and natural for kids," she adds.

The products, featuring bright character-laden packaging that was created with the help of Treehouse's design staff, initially found their way into Babies 'R' Us outlets as well as drug and speciality stores across Canada. "As soon as we show the retailers the packaging, we sell it," says Chacon. The initial line has been so successful that a second range, perhaps with products designed for bathtime play, is in the works. F.T. Ross is also currently looking into other kids licensing opportunities.

Over in the UK, Fiesta Crafts has started down the licensing road with Novel Entertainment's Horrid Henry after more than 20 years in the manufacturing business. The company specializes in making wall hangings, reward charts and hand puppets, and is launching its first licensed line this month featuring Horrid Henry through a deal brokered by licensing agency CPLG.

"Frankly, it's easier to get into the larger chains with licensed product," says Rob Trup, marketing manager at Fiesta Crafts.



Eco-friendly F.T. Ross tapped Treehouse-branded kid-friendly bath products to expand its retail reach, while UK-based Fiesta Crafts turned to Novel's Horrid Henry for a boost

"We were looking at growing the business and we see licensed product as a route in."

The initial line includes large and small magnetic star charts as well as hand puppets. And while Fiesta is busy arranging distribution for the line, the company is starting to consider other licensed opportunities. "We don't see ourselves becoming fully licensed, but we will start with this one, give it a year and then start looking for others," says Trup.

Finally there's Toronto, Canada-based StickerYou. The company, founded in the summer of 2008, employs proprietary technology that allows users to create their own die-cast stickers. For US\$6.99 consumers can fashion a personalized letter-sized page of stickers online that are then shipped through the mail.

"People want to personalize everything," says Andrew Witkin, StickerYou's president and chief executive. "Everybody loves brands and wants to engage with them. And the brands want to participate, too." So far, StickerYou has inked deals with CBS Consumer Products for Star Trek, Chorion for Mr. Men and Little Miss and Lego, with licenses for Justice League (Warner Bros. Consumer Products) and Ghostbusters (Sony Consumer Products) in the works. Each brand has the ability to set the parameters of the DIY tech. As well, the patented sticker-making technology can reside on the IP's website in the form of a widget, as well as on StickerYou's site and other third-party sites.

"We have found more and more promotion and ad agencies are interested in it," says Witkin. "And entertainment companies have been reaching out to us as well." **GR**

LINKS

• Fiesta Crafts >	www.fiestacrafts.co.uk
• F.T. Ross >	www.franktross.com
• StickerYou >	www.stickeryou.com

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WHO ARE THEY CALLING FUNNY?

KIDS, TEENS AND HUMOR PART 2

by erin miller

nickelodeon
KALEIDOSCOPE
REFLECTING TRENDS...TODAY AND TOMORROW

In April's Kaleidoscope, we explored the different types of humor identified by kids, teens and parents. Having learned from part one of this study just how much individual senses of humor can vary, it was no surprise to learn that the media kids and teens found funny vary just as much. Part two of this study takes a look at *who* kids and teens find funny as well as what media content makes them laugh.

Throughout this research project, we continually commented on just how funny the kids and teens we talked to were and, as it turns out, they couldn't agree more. When asked who their funniest family member is, kids and teens nominated themselves—particularly teen boys. Coming in a close second is Dad, holding true to our 2009 family research that found Dad plays the "fun" role in the home. When asked how funny they think they are (using a scale of one to 11, where one equals not funny and 11 is really funny), respondents gave themselves a mean score of 8.6. Boys, however, consistently rated themselves slightly higher than girls did across all ages.

As for who tops the funny scale among actors and comedians, Adam Sandler sits at the top of kids' and teens' lists, followed by Jim Carey and George Lopez. When asked who or what kids and teens turn to when they're in the mood to laugh, a full 60% cited TV as a favored outlet, followed by "talking to your friends" (48%), "watching a movie" (43%) and "going online" (31%).

Taking a closer look at TV, movies and online content, consistent themes surfaced across the three platforms. When polled on what TV shows they laugh at the most, kids and teens ranked *America's Funniest Home Videos* (AFHV) number one, followed by *Family Guy* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*. AFHV's combination of unexpected situations and physical humor is what our respondents found appealing about the show. As one 14-year-old boy said, AFHV shows "people doing dumb things or random things happening—I laugh and I can't stop watching." And while AFHV offers "real life," relatable humor, *Family Guy* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*' appeal lies in their nonsensical approaches, often referred to as "outrageous" and "stupid."

When it comes to movies, 2009's *The Hangover* was deemed the funniest film, especially among teen boys and girls. A 15-year-old girl said, "The humor is a little dirty, but the facial expressions are what truly make [*The Hangover*] hysterical. The reactions that the characters have are so unexpected, which adds to the humor." *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, *The SpongeBob Movie*, *Madagascar*, *Up* and *Shrek* also had more than several mentions as the funniest movie. Though the movies that skewed younger (ages eight to 10) tended to be animated, not all animated movies skewed young. This was clear in the cases of *Alvin and the Chipmunks* and *The SpongeBob Movie*, demonstrating the broad appeal of many modern-day animated films.

For its part, online content appears to offer the same realistic, unexpected humor found in AFHV (think comical videos featuring animals, babies and bloopers). And the internet, above other platforms, seems to be the most viral when it comes to discovering new content. Many of our respondents stated they heard about funny online content from a friend or sibling. Furthermore, half of all respondents said they discover new content from the source itself, randomly exploring recommended or suggested videos posted on any given site. In turn, they share their discoveries with friends and family. Similarly, parents are also quick to tell their kids about a funny video they may have come across. **N**

This concludes our two-part report on humor. In the next Kaleidoscope, we'll explore what kids and families have planned for the summer this year. For more information, contact Kaleidoscope@nick.com.

(Source: Nickelodeon Kids and Family Research, February 2010; Touchstone Research, March 2010. Quantitative Sample Size: N = 700 kids and teens ages 8-17)

In an effort to keep you in touch with our audience and give a voice to our consumers, the Brand and Consumer Insights Department at Nickelodeon Kids & Family has created Nickelodeon Kaleidoscope. Every month, Kaleidoscope will capture key areas of interest across the kid and family cultural landscape, provide an understanding of attitudes and behaviors, and report on trends and buzz.

iCarly's engaging leads put the IP at the top of the charts with US tweens

CHARMING CHARACTERS US TWEENS RATE LICENSED-PROPERTY APPEAL

by mary ann farrell

What do characters like Mario from Mario Brothers, Zack and Cody, and Puss in Boots all have in common? The results from California-based E-Poll Market Research's latest edition of its *E-Score Character Kids* study reveal they each have above-average awareness and strong appeal among US tweens (kids ages nine to 12), but barely register a blip on the radar of younger siblings and teens.

At E-Poll, we evaluate the awareness and appeal of live-action and animated characters with kids, tweens, teens and adults on a monthly basis. In most current research tweens tend to be lumped together with teens, and sometimes younger kids, making them a challenging consumer segment to target. Tweens form a discrete segment in their own right for a number of reasons, including the enormous income at their disposal, their high levels of media consumption,* and their influence on household purchases and the tastes of younger siblings. For better or worse, tweens are also at an age where they build brand associations on a conscious level, and brands make strong impressions that can last a lifetime.

Understanding this target is critical to building character-brand equity as well as identifying characters with potential. However,

tweens can be fickle and unpredictable given the tremendous social, physical and emotional changes they're experiencing. In order to accurately capture the opinions of tweens, *E-Score Character Kids* uses proven research methodology, asking kids to evaluate character attributes using their own words like "boring," "cool" and "popular."

Several things make tweens unique as consumers.

1. They are more brand loyal than teens and younger kids.
2. Parents provide the bulk of their spending money, so they are less price-sensitive than teens.
3. Family is more important to them than it is to teens.
4. They still share many attitudes in common with younger kids.
5. Establishing and "fitting in" with a peer group is much more important to them, with conformity to peers peaking between the ages of 11 and 12. The importance placed by tweens on being part of a group, means many feel most comfortable in environments where peer pressure conditions behavior.

In general, tweens still have one foot in the world of children and one in the world of teens. This split is reflected in their preferences for products, brands and even characters. So which characters have the strongest appeal among tweens?

Boys and girls pick their fave IPs

Boys nine to 11

Character/property	Aware (%)	Like a lot (%)
1 Phineas and Ferb	46	66
2 Iron Man (live action)	69	64
3 Dug (Up)	29	61
4 Mata Nui (Lego Bionides)	30	60
5 King Julien (Madagascar)	38	59
6 Bumblebee (Transformers)	40	57
7 Tom and Jerry	64	56
8 Autobots (Transformers)	38	56
9 Scrat (Ice Age)	37	55
10 Mario (Super Mario Brothers)	79	54
11 Aang (Avatar: The Last Airbender)	26	54
12 Anakin Skywalker (Star Wars)	59	53
13 Spider-Man	87	53
14 Albus Dumbledore (Harry Potter)	36	52
15 Toothless (How to Train Your Dragon)	20	52

Girls nine to 11

Character/property	Aware (%)	Like a lot (%)
1 iCarly	76	75
2 Wizards of Waverly Place	68	66
3 Alvin and the Chipmunks	86	60
4 Alex Russo (Wizards of Waverly Place)	59	60
5 Lilly Truscott (Hannah Montana)	42	57
6 Hermione Granger (Harry Potter)	43	57
7 Sonny Munroe (Sony with a chance)	33	57
8 Sam Puckett (iCarly)	31	56
9 Webkinz	39	56
10 Jacob Black (Twilight)	25	56
11 Scrat (Ice Age)	37	55
12 Puss in Boots (Shrek)	56	53
13 Zack and Cody	80	53
14 i-Dog (Hasbro)	34	53
15 Nintendogs	29	52



BUZZ GENERATOR



BRAND DOMINATOR



GAME CHANGER



It's worth noting that gender plays a distinct role in character recognition and preference at this age. While there are characters that enjoy broad appeal with boys and girls, they are few and far between. Most top-ranked characters with this demo are driven by one gender that finds them very appealing.

As of the latest fielding of *E-Score Character Kids* survey, where we have evaluated more than 700 unique names in the last two years, characters with the highest appeal among tweens are a mix of live-action and animated. The live-action characters tweens find appealing tend to be "funny," "cool," "good" and "popular." Generally, characters that appeal to tweens have traits that they can either identify with, or aspire to, and that are important for social acceptance.

Coming in at first-place this time around is Carly from *iCarly*, (72% aware, 58% "like a lot") with the characters from Disney's *Wizards of Waverly Place* (56% aware, 56% "like a lot") ranking second, and Phineas and Ferb landing in third place with 48% awareness among tweens and a 56% score on the "like a lot" scale.

Age-appropriateness also helps propel characters to the top of the heap with this demo. The tweens we polled said the character must be "for my age" to be considered appealing. Girls are a little more likely to accept younger-skewing characters they describe as "cute" (like Webkinz and Alvin and the Chipmunks), but overall high-appeal characters are those considered age-appropriate by at least 75% of tweens.

While tweens require the live-action characters they find appealing to be multi-dimensional (i.e. interesting, popular, cool and funny), animated characters can often get by on being considered "funny" and "friendly, like SpongeBob Squarepants, who consistently has high appeal. Animated characters in the top 10, behind Phineas and Ferb, include Scrat, the breakout Paleolithic squirrel from *Ice Age*, *Up*'s Dug, Donkey from *Shrek*, Tom and Jerry and Alvin and the Chipmunks. These top-rated toon characters also have fairly universal appeal and appear on both girls' and boys' lists, with the exception of Alvin and the Chipmunks—unlike boys, girls rate them as "funny" and "cute," putting the little rodents at the top of girls' lists.

The distinct differences in taste and attitude between male and female tweens, reflected in their character preferences, are important to consider when targeting this demo as consumers. Girls tend to want to see more characters with socially desirable traits like those possessed by Sam Puckett and Carly from *iCarly*, The Twilight Saga's affable wolf boy Jacob Black and Hermione Granger from the Harry Potter franchise. Girls believe these characters are cool, popular, funny, a good friend and, in the case of Jacob Black, cute. In contrast, boys want to see more of characters usually described as cool, powerful, heroic, interesting and boy-centric. These include Mata Nui from Lego's *Bionicles*, Bumblebee and the Autobots from *Transformers*, Iron Man and Captain Jack Sparrow from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films. Notably, the most important characteristic when assessing appeal for both boys and girls is "cool."




In many respects tweens have more in common with their younger siblings (ages six to eight) than they do with teens, particularly since many of the characters that resonate most with younger kids are aspirational and have already been embraced by tweens. Younger kids tend to favor animated characters they consider "friendly," "fun," "a good friend" and "nice." At the top of the list of characters they find appealing and want to see more of are Alvin and the Chipmunks, Phineas and Ferb, SpongeBob SquarePants, Dug from *Up* and Sid the Sloth from the *Ice Age* films.

Marketers looking to extend their character brands or promote their products using licensed characters to the tween market will need to develop a deeper understanding of this consumer segment and the things that differentiate it from other age groups. The unprecedented growth in media consumption among this

Tweens nine to 11

	Character/property	Aware (%)	Like a lot (%)	Want to see more of (%)
1	iCarly	72	58	50
2	Wizards of Waverly Place	56	56	42
3	Phineas and Ferb	48	56	36
4	Scrat	37	55	48
5	Dug (<i>Up</i>)	29	55	50
6	Alvin and the Chipmunks	83	53	41
7	Zack and Cody	75	52	38
8	Iron Man (live action)	54	52	45
9	Donkey	60	51	28
10	Tom and Jerry	63	51	31
11	Puss in Boots	55	51	44
12	SpongeBob SquarePants	84	51	41
13	Alex Russo	47	50	38
14	King Julien	37	50	37
15	Sonny Munroe	24	50	48

demographic in the last five years means marketers have many more potential points of contact. Precise targeting with an eye to the characteristics that make tweens unique and a worthwhile demo, can maximize results. 

**The Kaiser Family Foundation Study—Media in the Lives of 8 to 18 year olds (January 2010). "The jump in media use that occurs when young people hit the 11- to 14-year-old age group is tremendous—an increase of more than three hours a day in time spent with media (total media use), and an increase of four hours a day in total media exposure.*

Mary Ann Farrell is SVP of research at Encino, California-based E-Poll Market Research (www.epollresearch.com). E-Poll's Monthly study *E-Score Character Kids* surveys 500 US kids ages six to 12, and their parents, and evaluates character awareness, appeal, 31 kid-specific attributes and extensibility. For more information please contact Farrell at 818-995-4960, ext. 22.



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Prevent the Disco Rebirth

The teen trio is taking a social turn with Facebook game *Totally Spies! Fashion Agents*

by wendy goldman getzler

FACEBOOK FRIENDS

MARATHON ENTERS THE SOCIAL GAMING RACE

AS social games continue to flood the pages of the world's most-trafficked social networking site, Facebook, kids content owners and producers are eyeing the space warily, with an adventurous few diving in. French prodco Marathon Media, a Zodiac subsidiary, is arguably one of the first to test the waters to further engage the audience of its tween-centric toon *Totally Spies!*, extend the franchise and, if all goes to plan, make a bit of extra dough.

Marathon GM David Michel and his team commissioned long-time French gaming collaborator OUAT Entertainment to develop *Totally Spies! Fashion Agents* for Facebook, which currently houses some 400-million profiles worldwide. Airing in 120 countries, with five seasons completed and a core fan base of ever-social, ever-chatty tween girls, *Totally Spies!* is Marathon Media's most successful property and seemed a natural test subject for Facebook as a gaming platform. "Girls are more keen on meeting up online," says Michel. "We wouldn't do it for a boys show."

The game, conceived and developed over seven months or so, targets users ages 13 to 25 and encourages them to create identities and become fashionable spies while building teams and sharing virtual apartments with their friends. (Though the audience of *Totally Spies!* is younger than the intended Facebook demographic, Michel says the show's longevity has allowed it to garner loyal fans who grew up with the brand and continue to identify with it.)

The business model for the game revolves around converting visitors into paid users and relies on micro transactions,

whereby users can buy individual virtual items or credits through a subscription. The site takes payments through traditional means like credit cards or up-to-the-minute modes à la mobile apps. The goal over the next two to three years is to hit a 5% conversion rate with a marketing budget of less than US\$1.2 million. And right now, marketing is fittingly focused on social media efforts.

Marathon's *Totally Spies!* website alone currently has 800,000 subscribers and roughly 50% of these are frequent, active users. And the fans, it seems, have proven to be reliable. Since its soft launch in English and French on April 20, *Totally Spies! Fashion Agents* has garnered approximately 2,000 users, who have been privy to the new missions and functions added to the game every week. Still in beta format, the title will officially launch at the end of June and have versions in five more languages by the end of the year.

For both Marathon and OUAT, the feedback from the fans has been integral to the game's evolution and an eye-opening experience. "We definitely need to have direct communication with fans on the shows," says Michel. "With *Totally Spies!*, we received lots of feedback from the audience without even requesting it—that's how we started thinking about communities."

For its part OUAT, which has developed five games based on *Totally Spies!*, is planning on making the game accessible just about anywhere, and is currently working on iPad and iPhone versions. **N**

LINKS

Marathon Media >
OUAT >

www.marathon.fr
www.ouat-e.com

decoding the digital kid

Pondering Pokémagic

Eight ingredients for interactive success

By Dr. Warren Buckleitner

OK class, it's time to learn about effective interactive design. Today's case study? Pokémon.

I was reminded of the power of the Pokémon brand recently when I spotted three style-conscious high school boys, each with a red-and-white Pokéwalker pedometer hanging off their belts. These guys are supposed to be too old for Pokémon, but apparently they didn't get the memo.

The gadgets, which are included with the recently released *Pokémon SoulSilver* and *Pokémon HeartGold* video game titles (US\$40 apiece for Nintendo DS and DSi), are part of the property's interesting recipe for creating interactive design that works.

And adhering to the recipe is what's helped the Pokémon franchise hold up so well against the continual ebb and flow of video game technology. It also helps us understand why there's a Pokémon store in Rockefeller Center in New York City.

Of course, the best way to understand why Pokémon works so well is to cough up 40 bucks and play it yourself. But if you don't have the time or money, start by watching the first 12 minutes of one of the new Pokémon demo spots filmed in real time (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ2YWmdHzQ8>). Now consider these eight ingredients for success.

1. Success, right up front All DS Pokémon games start the same familiar way. The MUC (Minimum User Competency), in this case reading, is well-matched with the task at hand. All introductory videos can be skipped, and it is possible to experience success in the first few seconds of the game.

2. Hooks to a child's life (a.k.a. meaningfulness) Pokémon games let players explore towns, talk to mentors, have friends and take care of pets, which



start out weak and become stronger with the player's help. And the fight against bad guys could be pulled right out of Carl Jung's archetypal playbook.

3. Free exploration Pokémon takes place in maze-like sets of connected villages, and players can go where they please, using a map for help. So Pokémon provides structure, within which players can exercise creativity—they can always get out of whatever they get into and there's no single way to play the game.

4. Feelings of ownership The Pokémon players I interviewed while reviewing this title described their Pokémon experience as "mine." This sensibility is engendered right at the outset. Children enter their names at the start and they're then embedded into the game's dialogue. This tried-and-true technique is applied with mastery here. Kids can also customize their persona, play as a male or female and give their Pokémon creatures silly (or serious) nicknames.

5. Surprises You never know what is going to spring out of the grass, or when it will happen. This element of surprise is enhanced by the knowledge that there's a special Pokémon creature waiting for the player at the end of the game.

6. Collectibility A big part of the Pokémon experience is accumulating items that represent the game experiences.

Critics might call it consumerism (see a child's collection of Pokémon swag at <http://bit.ly/94m89Q>) or digital trick-or-treating, but the idea of collecting pulls kids in—like magic.

7. Emotional attachment As players progress, they bond with their little critters, which travel from screen-to-screen and continually get stronger. They also get messages like "You're really good" and "You treat your Pokémon with such kindness." There's a lot of positive energy in Pokémon. It makes players feel like family.

8. Real-world skills Any teacher knows a child becomes a better reader by reading, and Pokémon's game script is presented via myriad bite-sized sentences that must be read in sequence to participate fully in the game. There are also graphs to read and interpret, plus numerical quantities—up into the thousands—to compare and contrast. Spatial memory is exercised while reading the maze-like maps. Socially, Pokémon competence can earn bus-stop credibility and give children an excuse to trade, negotiate and gossip. Finally, the Pokéwalker counters criticisms that video games can't promote the pursuit of fresh air and sunshine. ☞

Dr. Warren Buckleitner is the Editor of the *Children's Technology Review*, which provides an insider's view on children's interactive media products. Reach him at warren@childrensoftware.com, or for more information, check out <http://childrenstech.com>.

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Whole new worlds

Transmedia storytelling opens licensing vistas

by jeff gomez

The entertainment industry at large has come to recognize that young adults and kids are consuming content voraciously, in ways not dreamt of even 10 years ago—they're looking to follow the story surrounding a given property on as many mediums as possible, be it traditional TV, films, fan sites or related products. But to make a property truly work across the various platforms out there, the entertainment concept has to be conceived as bigger than any one medium and constructed with a sense of how each grand story arc will play out across each media touchpoint. Transmedia storytelling, as it's become known, is really the art that's driving this approach.

With the recent ratification of the Transmedia Producer credit by the Producers Guild of America, the announcement of Stephen King's *The Dark Tower* as a concept that will run across a feature film trilogy and TV series, and Sony's relaunch of *Men in Black* as a global cross-platform franchise, the age of transmedia storytelling seems to have truly arrived. Aspirational worlds and immersive universes are replacing consumer loyalties to movie stars and network television. Right now, the sharpest studios are planning from earliest development to build their tentpole and youth-targeted properties so their storylines will translate to an array of traditional and new media platforms, which has the potential to significantly enhance or even fundamentally change the relationship between intellectual property creators, owners and licensees.

Traditional licensing deals between property owner and manufacturer, more often than not result in books, video game adaptations



VIDEO GAMES

TV

SOCIAL NETWORKING

ANIMATION

MOBILE

FILM





Thanks to a clever transmedia execution from licensee IDW Publishing, Paramount and CBS successfully bridged the gap between the universe in J.J. Abrams' 2009 *Star Trek* film and the one beloved by Trekkies the world over

FEATURE FILMS

or other consumer products that somehow recapitulate an element or image from the established story. T-shirts printed with logos or movie poster art, toy replicas and comic book series that deliver badly drawn versions of a movie IP or series' beloved heroes are still all too common. However, transmedia properties are helping push this model into the next decade, arguably making consumer products and promotions integral parts of maintaining and expanding the story world that drives the IP.

Of course, transmedia properties aren't hatched overnight and require long-term planning both on the content creation and media/product rollout sides. So how can high standards of quality and consistency be maintained over an entire story world while constantly expanding it and adding new creators and content along the way? I've managed to distill the construction of a transmedia world into four key steps.

- Prepare for multi-platform by expanding the story world
- Maintain the IP with transmedia planning
- Maximize value by assembling a franchise clearinghouse
- Build brand equity by validating audience participation

Expanding the story world

It all starts with getting a clear understanding of the property at hand. Who is your hero? Who is the villain? What is this fictional universe trying to say? You need to define the recurring themes, messages and archetypes that guide the central narrative of your property and describe the vision of the original creator. Take Spider-Man, for example. At its heart, the property revolves around teen superhero Peter Parker and the guilt he harbors because he let his uncle's murderer get away. In short, it's a story about a kid looking to do good in the world to make up for his past sin. Everything related to the property should stem from this vision, which can only be maintained by:

1. Making sure that the property's essence is organically woven into its every iteration, no matter how seemingly minor (i.e. a mobile phone app, or even the description on a hang-tag attached to a piece of apparel).

2. Explicitly and loyally observing the canon of the property's fictional universe in all iterations (i.e. an event that takes place in the video game is referenced as having happened by characters in the movie, etc.).

Everything else stems from this. You have to uncover the unique elements of your story that make it resonate with the audience. Ask yourself the basic questions: What are you trying to say? Who are you trying to reach? What's the appeal of the story? It's simple stuff, really, but the vital importance of these details are often overlooked in their vital importance. Two dudes in robes, whacking each other with light sticks does not equal *Star Wars*. The theme that George Lucas infuses into each piece of the *Star Wars* story is the importance of finding peace within yourself before you can bring balance to your world. And it's the presence of this theme that authenticates each new addition to the universe.

You must also create a story that alludes to a greater world within the fictional context. It's got to be a place that feels real. It comes with rules and a history, culture and slang. It exists beyond the borders of the screen. If you've skipped ahead to asking how something like the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles turned slime into a hot saleable commodity, you need to

BOOKS

ONLINE

LIVE EVENTS

To realize transmedia success, the IP needs to be the star for the show, placed at the center of all enterprise

back up a second and ask why kids found it so cool to have that yucky slime in the first place. The quick answer is because it represented something in the story.

A fully realized story world doesn't just make for a deeper narrative. It allows for the generation of hours and hours of quality content beyond the first presentation of the property. The main characters can have sidekicks who have histories that involve new adventures that take place in foreign lands populated by their own villains and steeped in specific legends. You see how quickly this works? It's possible to constantly create new stories and characters, but be sure to lay the groundwork so that every new twist and turn in the story emerges organically and is infused with the brand essence.

the gates to their properties unlocked, so that teams of writers and artists can add wonderful bits to the franchise canon. Though most of these worlds are now stewarded by other producers or groups of producers, the groundwork carefully laid by their creators continues to flourish as their licensed universes expand.

These are the visionaries, the people who know the history of the property (both real and fictional) and understand its core. They're the ones who know what the J. in Bartholomew J. Simpson stands for, what kind of kid he is, and why he is so important to Americans of a certain age. But they are also the type to know Homer is the true engine that drives The Simpsons. As far as creative is concerned, the buck stops with the visionary.

for assembling a set of guidelines or a franchise bible, which can be distributed in confidence to all interested parties. Participants willing to do the extra work to generate an engaging and persistent transmedia story world are rewarded by the producer, often with key events or major story developments designed to drive audiences to their product. So everything is "in game," it all counts, from the tags on T-shirts to the very last comic book.

Check out *Star Trek: Countdown* from licensee IDW Publishing, for example, which boasted all of the hallmarks of excellent transmedia execution. The 2009 feature film's producers granted a boon to the comic book publisher by allowing the screenwriters to create a four-issue prequel story that cleverly bridged the classic Star Trek universe to the new one introduced in J.J. Abrams' movie. This major piece of Trek lore helped soothe thousands of apprehensive Trekkies, who in turn primed the web with "thumbs up" blog entries and message board posts, and it sold like gangbusters as a trade paperback and iPhone digital comic.

Finally, transmedia producers participate in planning the franchise rollout. They help weave together story and medium, designating the launch platform and how its content will dovetail into that of the driving platform. Like orchestra conductors, they must coordinate how different parts of the story will act in concert, determining when to launch that video game prequel or when to activate those licensed chapter books.

Each consumer touch point tells a bit of the transmedia story. Or at least it should. Why should a person buy something new if it's just going to rehash something they've seen or heard before?

Failure to build and then observe canon can produce an "anything goes" universe in which your stories (and those of your licensees) are loaded with contradictions, schisms and nonsense. Canon allows for stories to build the brand through a framework of logic and consistency, even if the story world is fantastical or cartoonish in nature. For any multi-platform implementation of narrative, canon is imperative.

Transmedia planning

There is a reason almost everybody has heard of Lucas, James Cameron and J.J. Abrams—they've successfully created franchises from concept to fruition and beyond, and then left

In recent months, studios have come to recognize that the responsibility for conveying this canon to various corporate divisions, sponsors and licensees can fall on the shoulders of a new player, the transmedia producer. Something of a dynamic bridge between the creative, product development and marketing teams, transmedia producers are either brought on as consultants or employed via an in-house position. Savvy to the elements of story, keen on the strengths and weaknesses of various media platforms, and sensitive to the politics and bureaucracies of corporate environments, these franchise stewards facilitate brand extension while preserving the soul of the brand.

Transmedia producers are often responsible

Opening product channels

Once your franchise steward or transmedia producer is in place, creating new content with the aid of a core brand mythology—even as your in-house creators and licensees are expanding your franchise universe—how do you keep these stories in the same world? And how do you keep your stories from getting stale? The answers lie in the establishment of a franchise clearinghouse.

The steward of the property, once the work of producing content is underway, must enable a team to vet the content and products emanating from the driving platform to make sure they make sense in the established continuity. Equally important, the new, fresh elements that licensees and other authors add into the mix have to be parsed and integrated into the established mythology.

Each consumer touch point tells a bit of the story. Or at least it should. Why should a person



More than just dudes in robes locked in mortal combat, every extension of Star Wars is infused with George Lucas's central tenet that it's necessary to find inner peace before an individual can restore balance to his or her world, which in turn authenticates each new addition to the property's universe

buy something new if it's just going to rehash something they've seen or heard before? With so many options to choose from in the media marketplace, these consumers will most likely move on to find a franchise that rewards their searches with new material. A task force, particularly in the case of larger firms, needs to be assembled for creative and strategic guidance.

Successful task forces at companies like Disney, Sony and Microsoft Game Studios allow for key members of each property team, department and division and related licensees to meet regularly (monthly in the early going, possibly weekly during the rundown to rollout or major events). These task forces submit and review editorial content, graphic designs and product development, exchange news and developments, disseminate information from the franchise visionary, incubate ideas for cross-promotion and support one another's endeavors with shared assets and brainpower.

The steward or transmedia producer maintains a presence in these clearinghouses by helping to devise submission guidelines, allowing for new content to be expedited through the system and supervising a centralized and streamlined approval procedure.

Clearinghouses are also used for conflict resolution. Vast storylines generated by multiple

factions for an array of media platforms are likely to raise contradictions. Systems are created for determining alternative solutions to creative disputes. Because the IP is positioned at the center and placed above corporate politics, task force members see the clearinghouse as an answer-oriented asset, rather than as a place where ideas go to die.

Finally, franchise clearinghouses allow for the maximization of story potential. Team members are encouraged to recommend or provide solutions that energize and revitalize stories, rather than stamp them into irrelevance. Content worthy of being an important addition to the canon of the story world is encouraged. Nothing slides under the radar and everything must count in a surprising and entertaining way.

Validate and celebrate

Who best to tell you what's going right (and wrong) with a property than the fans themselves? In truth, they are the torchbearers, the ones who keep it going, even between major product releases. Providing the means for audience participation is integral to any successful transmedia implementation. In short, if you show audience members that you're listening, provide them with a branded forum that invites personal and creative expression, and maybe

even talk to them directly now and then, the results can be quite powerful.

Forums in which fans talk to creators? Active social media sites? These are essential to the survival of a modern franchise. Successful transmedia is signified by two-way communication. Children are growing up in a culture where creative tools are at their fingertips. We must embrace these impulses and ignore them at our peril. The ideas are endless, as are the possibilities. By asking fans what they want, everyone can get what they need—better stories and even better revenues. **S**

—Special thanks to Caitlin Burns and Steele Filipek for their assistance on this article.



Jeff Gomez is the CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment and is a board member of the Producers Guild of America East. He is one of the world's leading transmedia

storytellers and an expert in transmedia planning, development and production, having worked with clients such as Sony Entertainment, Disney, Twentieth Century Fox, Mattel, Microsoft and Hasbro. Follow him on Facebook at Starlight Runner Entertainment and on Twitter @Jeff_Gomez.

Doors open for business

by gary rusak

Cartoon Network's Generator Rex

New IPs and opps hitting the show floor in Las Vegas

CNE revs up Generator Rex

With the third iteration of Ben 10 ready to go, Cartoon Network Enterprises and Turner Sports Strategy/Marketing/Productions SVP Christina Miller is aiming to "maintain partnerships and continue to be a leader in the boys consumer products space." While Ben 10's licensee line-up is pretty complete, Miller says she is always interested in identifying new categories and business for Ben and Spin Master/Nelvana hit property Bakugan, which CNE reps in the US. "We are really looking at innovation," she says, "for things we haven't seen in the past...We are looking to take something like Bakugan into more experimental territory."

Sticking with boys action, CNE is launching a program for newcomer Generator Rex. The new core-boys action IP and series was created by Man of Action, the same shop behind Ben 10. It follows the adventures of 15-year-old Rex, who is able to create machines with his body after being infected by microscopic nanites. The clearly toyetic series has already landed Mattel as its master toy partner and has Warner Bros. on-board for home entertainment with an interactive partner to follow shortly. However, Miller says she's waiting until after the

initial product rollout between spring 2010 and fall 2011 to lock down secondary category licensees and promotional partners.

BBCW takes Night Garden to US

BBC Worldwide will be using Licensing Show to bring Iggle Piggle and the rest of the *In the Night Garden* gang to the US marketplace. On the cusp of announcing a State-side broadcast deal for the international preschool hit, BBCW's MD of children's and licensing Neil Ross Russell says the company will have its biggest-ever presence at this year's show and is on the hunt for a broad range of US partners for Ragdoll's surrealist preschool property. While Hasbro has sewn up the global master toy deal for the series, opportunities abound in other core categories like apparel and related soft lines.

Other US priorities for the commercial arm of UK pubcaster BBC include a push for Little Airplane Productions' preschool property 3rd & Bird. "For us, 3rd & Bird is about plush and publishing," says Ross Russell, explaining that its soft edge will have to be reflected in the merchandising program. "Hardlines and plastics are not going to work for that one in particular," he says, adding he would like to replicate in North

America the success the licensing program has already achieved in the UK.

Disney readies Cars 2, The Muppets

The world's largest entertainment licensor plans to tote a suitcase full of IPs to Vegas. Leading the way is the much-anticipated sequel *Cars 2* that will hit theaters next summer. After *Cars*-related products generated US\$2 billion at retail last time around, it's fair to say that key categories have been snapped up by eager licensees. Another big-screen release sure to capture attention is *The Muppets*. Kermit and co's latest outing is slated for a fall 2011 release and Disney Consumer Products plans to support the property through a number of lifestyle categories. "We will continue our strong retailer programs in fashion for 2010," says Lisa Avent, VP and GM of global television franchise development for DCP. "We will look to go broader with other categories in 2011, especially focusing on consumer electronics, novelties, holiday, figures, collectible plush, social stationery and health & beauty."

For tween boys, Disney is spinning off products based on hit animated series *Phineas and Ferb*, which currently airs on Disney XD and

The background of the entire page is a vibrant jungle scene with a blue sky, green foliage, and brown tree branches. Several cartoon animal characters are depicted: a white cat with pink stripes and large eyes at the top left; a red and white squirrel-like character at the top right; a yellow and brown bear-like character on the left; a large white and grey bear-like character at the bottom left; and a grey and white raccoon-like character at the bottom right. In the center, the title 'YooHoo & FRIENDS' is written in a playful, bubbly font. To the right of the title, there is a small trademark symbol (TM) and two small illustrations of a character holding a four-leaf clover.

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Disney Channels in more than 135 countries. Avent says most of the opportunities associated with the popular series lie on the promotional and retail fronts.

Moving over to the Hundred Acre Wood, DCP's efforts to bring Winnie the Pooh back to its roots will continue this year in the lead-up to a new Pooh theatrical movie slated for spring 2011. The focus will continue to be on infants and toddler products with an ad campaign directed at moms. "We have a tremendous contingent of active Winnie the Pooh licensees," says Emma Whittard, director of franchise development and marketing at DCP. "But there are always expanding product categories, consumer segments and retail distribution opportunities that we'll consider. We are always open to new ideas for product."

That's not all, folks

Warner Bros. Consumer Products is aiming to reinvigorate the program for some of its most iconic characters. Bugs, Daffy and pals have an all-new series, *The Looney Tunes Show*, that's landing on Cartoon Network US this fall. "It's our crown jewel," says Karen McTier, EVP of domestic licensing and worldwide marketing. "We have millions of fans, thousands of products, and we are going to be using the new series to do some interesting things—new products and new artwork to continue this classic brand." The style guides for the characters have been redone, but McTier expects the classic style to continue, complemented by the new art and fresher look.

While there isn't a program out there more mature than the one built around Looney Tunes, McTier says WBCP's always looking for meaningful promotional relationships, along the lines of the deal it just struck with the US Ad Council to have Looney Tunes characters appear in PSAs for First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move Campaign. "It takes ongoing management to keep the characters relevant," McTier says. "But the new series will have the same tone that made the original series so successful in the first place." As for what WBCP will

be seeking out at the Show, McTier is open to new ideas and concepts to further the ever-green brand. "We are always looking for new and interesting partners," she says. "The Show is our opportunity to meet with new companies and see their concepts. We are certainly open to looking at new and fresh creative for Looney Tunes."

HIT keeps Thomas rolling

HIT Entertainment is rolling into Licensing Show with the aim of expanding the licensee portfolio of its Thomas & Friends program. The number-one boys preschool license in the US, UK and Australia, Thomas is still a top priority for HIT in terms of new partners and renewals. "We are going to be making sure we have best-in-class partners in all areas," says Pamela Westman, EVP of consumer products and home entertainment for HIT's State-side operations. Additionally, HIT will be looking to expand the Thomas program in electronic gaming and new media categories.

Angelina Ballerina will also get her turn. The new CGI series for girls ages four to seven based on the property bowed on PBS Sprout in the US last fall and has secured Fisher-Price as its master toy licensee, as well as an exclusive with US retail giant Target. "We are now looking at what comes next," says Westman. "We want to fill out the portfolio with secondary toy and softlines partners." Of key interest is finding partners in the ballet and dancewear area, as maintaining an active lifestyle is a core tenet of the series.

Marvel looks long term

With a robust slate of theatrical releases in the offing, Marvel Entertainment is concentrating on creating long-term licensing relationships across a number of upcoming films, including *Thor*, *The First Avengers: Captain America* and the *The Avengers* in 2012. "Marvel is uniquely positioning Avengers as an umbrella theme that will provide licensees and retailers the opportunity to develop integrated, long-term consumer products programs based on the

individual films and overall story arc," says Paul Gitter, president of consumer products, North America at Marvel Entertainment. So far, deals with Hasbro (toys), Hallmark (social expressions), Crayola (arts and activity) and Maisto (die-cast toy vehicles) have been inked for the entire slate, but Gitter says there is still room for more partners, especially in retail and co-branded opportunities.

The Super Hero Squad Show, which debuted on Cartoon Network US last year, is also a focus. The aged-down franchise has a number of licensees attached, but Gitter's looking to add to the roster with "industry-leading partners" in a number of categories, including accessories. Additionally, Gitter is focused on creating more retail and co-branded promotions in the same vein as current partnerships with Harley-Davidson, Monster Jam and Orange County Choppers. Direct-to-retail deals are also very much top of mind for Marvel.

The Bs have it at Nelvana

Babar, Bakugan and Beyblade make up the trinity of Licensing Show priorities for Toronto, Canada's Nelvana Enterprises. After launching a new Babar series on TF1 in France, Nelvana has been busy rolling out new product across that territory and will be looking to name a number of international agents to handle the evergreen in other regions.

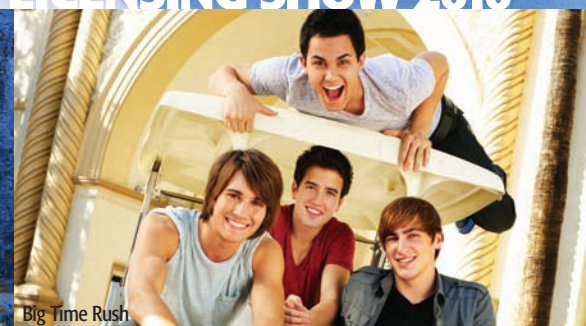
Turning to boys action, Nelvana has 50 eps of the re-imagined Beyblade series ready to roll out on Cartoon Network US and Canada's YTV this summer. The Japanese series about teams that battle each other with the aid of spinning tops made a splash earlier this decade, and Nelvana is betting its time has come again. "We are well on our way down the agents route," says Colin Bohm, VP and MD of Nelvana Enterprises. "We have a lot of partners to announce, and now we are looking at secondary categories, like softlines, for the US." Expect new Beyblade toys from Hasbro to hit mass-market retail this fall as Nelvana plots its strategy for reviving the brand. Turning to the last B, Bakugan's third season, *Gundalian Invaders*, should



Nerf



Fraggle Rock



Big Time Rush

continue to help drive sales of the bestselling toys and related products.

Everything coming up Peppa for E1

Already a force to be reckoned with in the UK and other international markets, E1 Entertainment will be focusing on pushing the presence of preschool IP Peppa Pig in the US. Peppa's series is currently enjoying exposure on Nick Jr. State-side, and even though it's only being broadcast as an interstitial, but there are rumblings it might graduate to full series status soon. "It's very much entering a mature phase in the UK," says Andrew Carley, head of licensing at E1 Entertainment, noting that theme park Peppa Pig World is currently under construction in New Forest, Hampshire to open by Easter 2011. "Globally, it's been a slow burn, but now we are starting to make a name internationally with it."

Carley will be looking for US licensees in key preschool categories, such as toys, clothing and interactive games. "We have no US partners, so it's a pretty clean slate," he says. "We would want to replicate the way it rolled out in the UK, with managed growth."

Hasbro takes a hard look at Nerf

After making a splash at last year's Show with an impressive Transformers display, Lisa Licht, GM of Hasbro Studios, says that the Pawtucket, Rhode Island-based company will be focusing on re-igniting and re-imagining some of its core brands in the consumer products field. "We are really focusing on our mega-brands," she says. "It's a global show and our effort over the last two years has been on taking properties that have been driven out of the US into the international market." A prime example of this new approach is squishy projectile toy line Nerf, says Licht. "Two years ago Nerf was very US-centered," she says. "Now it has started taking off in Asia and Europe." Hasbro is interested in building Nerf into a full lifestyle brand that targets tween boys, and will be looking at furthering its reach by seeking out new apparel and videogame partners.

Along with re-connecting with numerous partners for its impressive stable of brands, including Monopoly, My Little Pet Shop, Transformers, Tonka and Playskool, Licht says Hasbro will also use the Show to preview a couple of new Hollywood releases like *Transformers 3* (2011) and *Stretch Armstrong* (2012).

Henson's Doozers dig being green

It's the first year The Jim Henson Company will have its own booth on the show floor. The company plans to use the high-profile placement to fill in the licensing program for preschool series *Dinosaur Train* that airs on pubcaster PBS in the States. With 25 licensees currently on-board, Melissa Segal, SVP of global consumer products, says Henson will be actively searching for home furnishings, room décor, confectionery and promotional partners for the property.

Also top of mind for the company in preschool is *The Doozers*, the new CGI series being co-produced with Toronto, Canada's Decode Entertainment that's based on the lil' green workmen from *Fraggle Rock*. The environmentally tinged series has been greenlit, and Henson is spreading the word to ensure that products hit retail shelves in 2012. "We are looking for partners who will mesh with the green sustainability aspect of the series," says Segal.

And after getting the rights back to *Fraggle Rock* last year, the company plans to grow the property's licensee roster. Segal's specifically on the hunt for comic book, softlines, novelty, accessories and footwear partners. "Manhattan Toy did well with some classic plush, so we think there is a lot more room for *Fraggle Rock*," says Segal.

Nickelodeon's in a Big Time Rush

While Nickelodeon's licensing slate is full for upcoming theatrical release *The Last Airbender*, which goes into theaters on July 2nd, Leigh Anne Brodsky, president of Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products, is turning an eye to product and promotions for its DVD window.

"Because this is a movie of epic proportions, we are going to chase the business for its DVD window and even for the sequel." Pointing to a deal that brought Nick's mega-properties *SpongeBob SquarePants* and *Dora the Explorer* to Serta mattresses and LazyBoy recliners last fall, Brodsky says it's her job to dig beyond traditional partnerships for Nick. "We are always looking for new outlets with ideas to make our properties come alive in a different way," she says. A good example are the *Dora* and *SpongeBob* Snuggies that will be unveiled at this year's show. "It's a fitting follow-up to last year's branded Chia head," says Brodsky.

In terms of new properties, NVCP is concerning itself with finding partners for its tween girl music-based series *Big Time Rush*, about four hockey-playing boys from Minnesota who find themselves getting whisked to Hollywood and transformed into the next big boy band. Expect a CD and DVD to hit US retail shelves this summer, and Brodsky's team plans to comb the show for partners for traditional tween-girl categories like accessories and apparel. Brodsky's particularly scouting products with an, er, tactile feel. "We are looking to blow it out," she says. "One of the things we are focusing on is creating kissable products."

Joester Loria thinks pink

Publishing property Pinkalicious is front and center for New York-based The Joester Loria Group. The book series for girls three to seven will be the subject of a major push at retail this fall with partners like Jakks Pacific (dolls and toys), CDI (dress-up) and Success (apparel) lined up. In order to expand the property, CEO Debra Joester is looking to secure partners in footwear, home textiles and confectionery. After the success of a partnership with QSR Burger King in March, Joester says that she'll also be on the lookout for similar promotional opportunities.

Chuggington rolls into US market

UK-based Ludorum is greasing the wheels on a US licensing program to build on the January



debut of its centerpiece property Chuggington on Playhouse Disney US. Already seen in more than 160 countries, including a coveted spot on CBeebies, the CGI preschool series about the lives of locomotive engines has Learning Curve as its global master toy partner and added US licensees Scholastic (publishing) and Anchor Bay (home entertainment) earlier this year. But that doesn't mean the licensing train has left the station.

Maureen Taxter, newly appointed SVP of consumer products for Ludorum's US operations, says the company will be looking for partners in home goods, soft goods and some toy categories. "We expect to be making some announcements at the show," she says. "Chuggington is an amazingly rich world and we are looking at exploring other characters and environments in our deals." Taxter says the brand is primarily focused on the core-preschool demographic, and she will look to fill the specialty tier of retail with high-quality products.

DHX Licensing unveils new IP

Hatched internally at Toronto, Canada's DHX Media, new collectibles-based IP Gaia Nathan will be the focus for the DHX Licensing team in Las Vegas. Hoping to capture some of the heat off blockbuster collectibles like Bakugan and Gormiti, DHX is unveiling the stackable collectible characters for the first time at the event. "Kids just love to collect and interact," says Polly Beel, director of marketing and licensing at DHX Licensing. "So, we wanted to do that but in a different way." The design-rich property revolves around six different worlds and their corresponding characters. "It's like an advanced version of rock, paper, scissors," explains Beel, who says she's open to working with partners to explore different aspects of the game, including online and real-world applications.

Another key property for Decode is the 55 x 11-minute CGI preschool series *Animal Mechanicals*, which gets its first US airing on new net The Hub this fall. The brightly colored series could be called Transformers for pre-

schoolers and features animals that morph into other shapes to solve problems. While in Vegas, DHX will be promoting the series' US debut and looking to secure a master toy partner that specializes in creating hard-plastic moulded toys for the initial launch, as well as a publishing partner.

Sniffing out new Clifford partners

Scholastic is gearing up to celebrate big red dog Clifford's 50th anniversary in publishing in 2012/2013. And Leslye Schaefer, SVP of licensing at Scholastic Corporation, is keeping an eye on landing collectibles licensees for a line to celebrate the milestone, as well as a few categories that might surprise potential partners. "We haven't had a master toy licensee in a while and we'll certainly be looking for that," says Schaefer. There are available slots in the greeting cards and party goods categories, in addition to apparel and home goods. "We had a robust program and it has gotten smaller," says Schaefer. "It ebbs and flows." Along with category openings, Scholastic is also in search of a retail partner to anchor Clifford's 50th-anniversary offerings.

Another high priority for Scholastic is girls four to seven series *WordGirl*, which is entering its second season on US pubcaster PBS. After inking a deal with Briarpatch (board games) and Paramount (home entertainment), Schaefer is looking to grow the program in the doll, electronic toys and interactive categories. Scholastic will also be looking for promotional partners for the educational IP.

Target zeroes in on AR video game

Augmented reality PlayStation Portable game *Invizimals* is UK-based Target Entertainment's most enticing offering at Licensing Show this year. The game for boys and girls seven and up involves players capturing and raising different monsters on their PSPs. Utilizing new augmented reality tech, the game was a top-three bestseller for the PSP platform across Europe in 2009, only bettered by *Gran Turismo* and *FIFA*. "I think in order to kick off the program, we're very much trying to identify

trading card companies," says Richard Woolf, director of licensing. "After that, we are looking at a vast range including apparel, accessories, figurines, collectibles, posters and stationery." The game landed at North American retailers last winter and so far has only been subject to a few t-shirt licenses and a poster deal with Bravado. Woolf believes the time is right to expand the reach of the property. As well, since Target manages the Sony Playstation account, along with 10 different game titles in the portfolio, it will be looking for deals involving the Sony PSP itself and is considering plush, soft toy and interactive plush partners for Sony's iPet game franchise.

States to get withit

From its beginning as a small UK-based retail chain, withit has grown its own stable of IP based on six different characters, including Cheeky Monkey, Chocolate Moose and Glamour Puss. Over the past six years, withit has hit licensing shows in the UK and Europe, but this is its first venture State-side. "We're hoping that in the US we can find some people who will be able to fully appreciate the scope of what our brand can offer," says Brad Caines, creative director at withit. While its characters currently have a retail presence in 50 countries and its 14 agents around the globe have found success in fashion, apparel and greeting card lines, withit is now turning to major US retailers to gauge their interest. "We are looking for a combination of agents and licensees in the US who might be interested in talking to us," says Caines.

Yo Gabba Gabba! on the brain

California-based Wildbrain is looking to fill specialty channels with merch based on preschool property Yo Gabba Gabba! "We get calls from retailers that are asking us for stuff," says Wildbrain CEO Michael Polis. "There is definitely room to expand." In terms of what categories in particular, Polis says that licensees should be thinking about innovating beyond the traditional categories that are already full.



with it



WordGirl

Suckers



He's also keen to find more promotional and retail partners.

W!dbrain will also be shopping around its girl gamer brand Clickstars. The web-based game is in beta testing right now and will be ready for the marketplace by Q4 this year. "I don't think there is much in the way for girl gamers and we are addressing that," says Polis. Details of the brand are still very much under wraps, but W!dbrain will start to tease licensing opportunities at the show.

4Kids celebrates Yu-Gi-Oh!

4Kids Entertainment will be looking to fill in its program for core-boys IP Yu-Gi-Oh!, which kicks off its 10th anniversary at this year's Licensing Show. EVP of marketing and licensing Roz Nowicki is aiming to add to a slate

of licensees that already includes Playmates (toys) and Konami (video games) with partners in the collectibles, home furnishing and apparel categories. Since a new season of the Yu-Gi-Oh! series is slated to bow on Cartoon Network US in September, Nowiki expects to attract new licensees to the fold.

On the international side, BRB International's two x 104-minute *Suckers* is a high priority, says MD of 4Kids International Sandra Vauthier-Cellier. The series featuring a group of toys that attach to the rear windows of cars currently airs in the US on Disney XD and is expected to rollout internationally later this year. Videogames, mobile phone accessories, toys, collectibles, apparel and back-to-school categories are wide open.

Collectibles going crazy for Bulldog

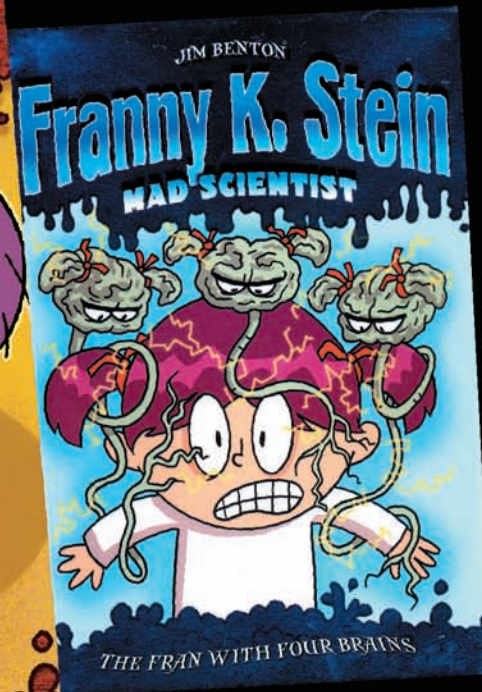
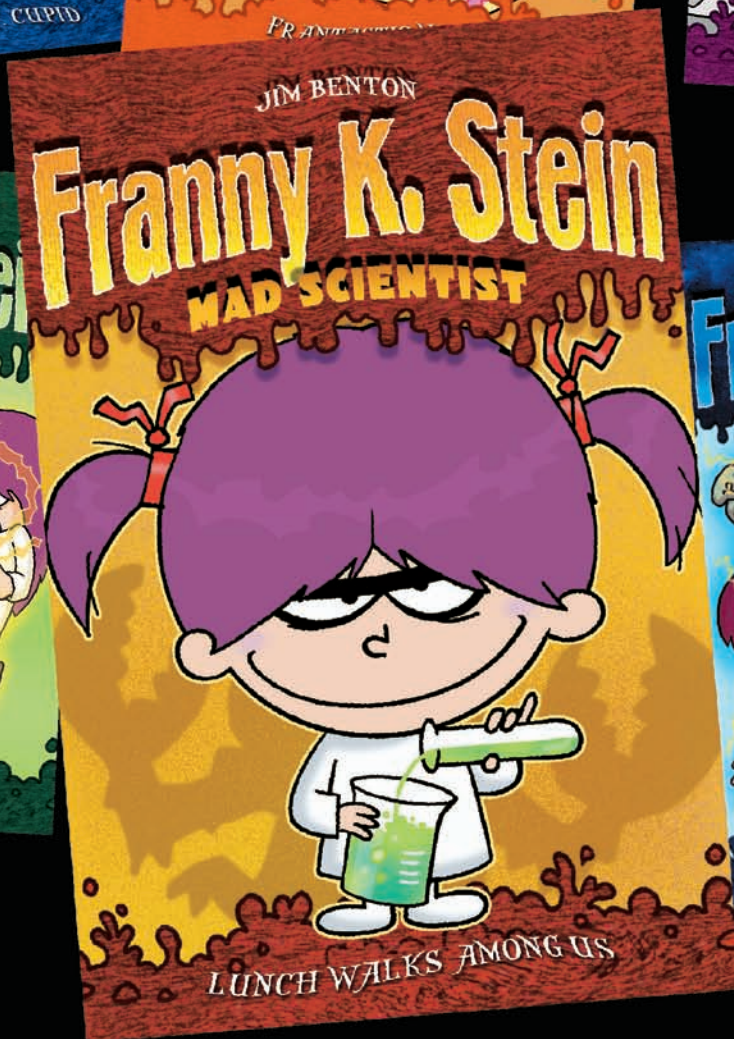
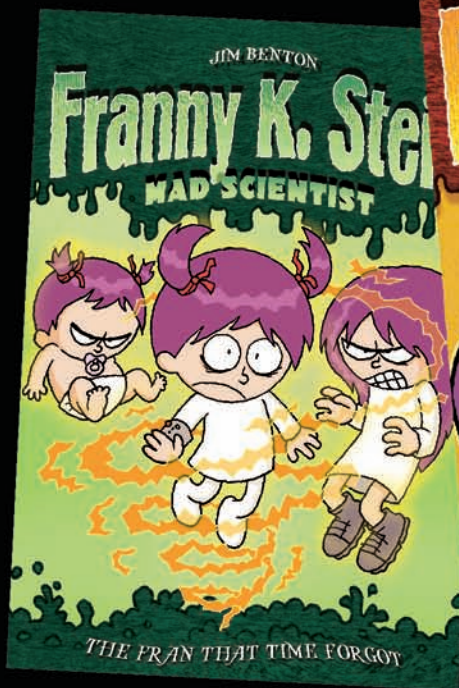
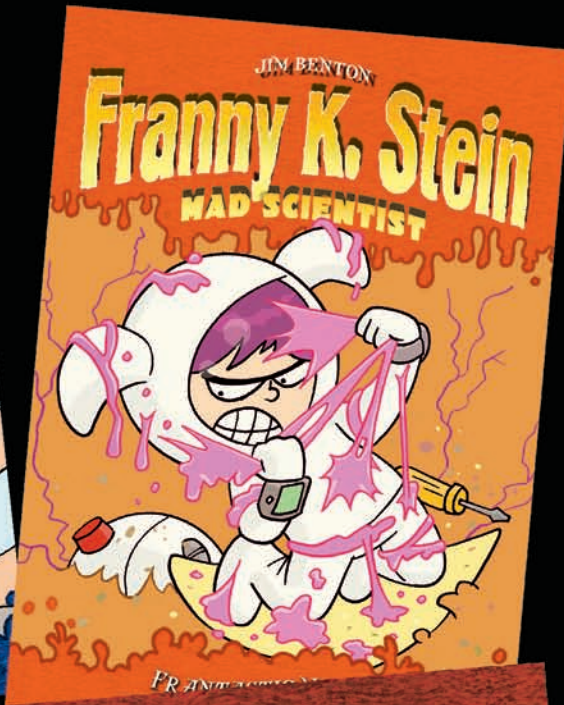
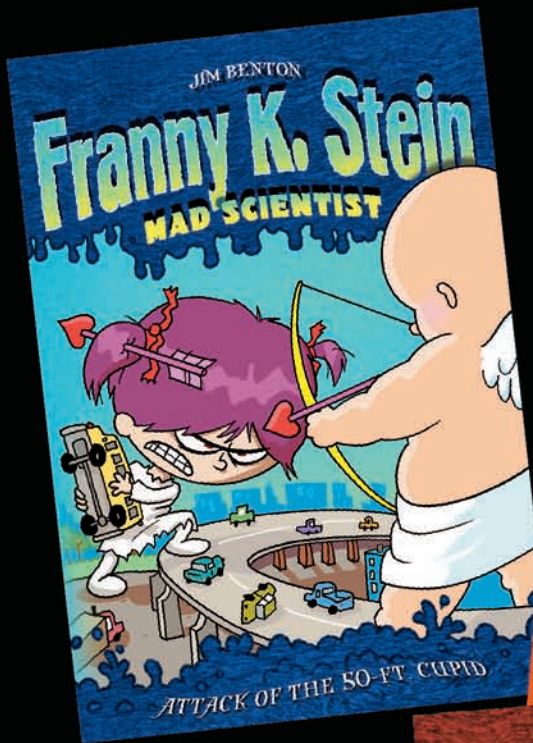
UK licensing shop Bulldog has set its sights on pushing Euro collectibles hit GoGo's Crazy Bones, which has had success in the UK, Benelux, Spain and Australia, into a truly global property. Initially targeted at boys five to nine, the playthings are attracting girls and an older demo. All of this is good news for Rob Corney, Bulldog Licensing MD, who is planning to add to the property's roster of 26 licensees. "We are looking to develop a full program in the US," he says, adding a worldwide master toy partner is at the top of his list to build out the toy offering. To drive the property and push it into character-based terrain, a TV series is in development with Toronto, Canada's Breakthrough Entertainment. **N**

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FIRST TAKE

Long-term goals—New chief Marick overhauls Fox L&M ops

by gary rusak

Sustaining a slate of mega-properties over years, if not decades, is the stated goal for Robert Marick, the recently named EVP of licensing and merchandising at Twentieth Century Fox. The former Disney exec and VP of sales and marketing at Time Warner has been tasked with fashioning a whole new philosophy for one of the globe's biggest IP players.

"The point of difference is how we handle the licensing," says Marick from his L.A. office. "We are looking at properties not just as a seasonal window of their theatrical release, but in the long-term. We want to keep them top-of-mind for years."

Marick's first order of business was to restructure Fox L&M's internal operations by setting up specific teams to handle retail, franchises and licensing categories. The franchise team is in place to identify TV or movie IPs with legs as they crop up, while the retail team focuses on liaising with retail partners and evaluating promotional and exclusive deals. The category team is being staffed with execs specializing in key licensed-product categories.

"We didn't have a retail team," says Marick, adding that Fox is currently in the process of setting up the internal mechanisms and adding staff that will serve his broader strategy.

On the property side, Marick has identified four kid-centric tentpole IPs to serve as the initial subjects of his new longer-term strategy. He's planning to make *Ice Age*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Alvin and the Chipmunks* and *Rio*—based on the 2011 CGI film from *Ice Age* creators Blue Sky Studios—go the distance.

"Previously we had limited our support to the launch of the film and the DVD," says Marick. "We are being much more strategic about how we roll out properties now." He notes that the three-pronged approach will hinge on "introducing, building and sustaining" programs over a period of three to five years at retail. "The first season will have its drivers, the second season we will expand upon that, and then in the third we will be adding new categories and new twists on old ones," he says.

The move, to an extent, is a reaction to retailers that have become more risk-averse and have tightened shelf space over the past six or




Looking to grow its stable of franchises, Fox L&M has April 2011 release *Rio* in its cross-hairs

seven years—they want to be sure they're investing their resources in a sustainable business. "Retailers are taking a very selective approach to what properties they are going to support," says Marick. "So it becomes our responsibility to bring them a comprehensive plan."

The changes will also be felt by licensees and potential licensees who partner with Fox. "Things are going to work differently because we are going to partner stronger, earlier and ongoing," he says. "We are looking for partners who will be with us for the long haul. We will want to see how their plans and product are going to evolve and change in terms of seasonality, price-point and new products."

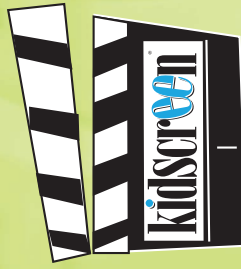
Rio is the first wholly new IP to be shaped by Marick's vision. The stereoscopic 3-D CGI film is aiming for broad appeal and tells the story of a rare bird who travels from his native Minnesota to Rio de Janeiro to find his avian soulmate, Jewel. Promising relatable characters, humor, vibrant colors, world music and a generous serving of dance, Fox believes it has all the earmarks of a perennial franchise and is lining up licensees sold on the long-term approach.

"We are going to have the entire gamut—toys and games, video games, accessories, home décor, party goods, publishing," says Marick, adding that the specific rollout timetable is still being worked out. "Our goal is to bring it all together and make it an event at retail." 

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FIRST TAKE

Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Story Line (A—animation, L—live action)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotions Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners
Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole						
Family	September 24, 2010	(CGI) Based on the first three installments of the series of fantasy books about a band of owls, the film follows Soren, a young owl enthralled by his father's epic stories of the Guardians of Ga'Hoole. Father and son travel to the Great Ga'Hoole Tree to join a community of owls that rises nightly to perform noble deeds and overcome the evil that lurks in its midst.	Warner Bros./Village Roadshow Pictures	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP of domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.solitto@warnerbros.com	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.solitto@warnerbros.com	Licensing and promo opps: WBOP is working on a focused merch program for the film
Megamind						
Family	November 5, 2010	(CGI) Megamind is the most brilliant super-villain the world has ever known. And the least successful. Over the years, his attempts to conquer Metro City are quashed, thanks to caped superhero "Metro Man," an invincible hero until the day Megamind actually kills him. Suddenly, Megamind is left a super-villain without a nemesis. Megamind feels the only way out of his rut is to create a new opponent, and ends up crafting a hero who doesn't want to save the world, but rather destroy it. Will evil genius Megamind become the unlikely hero of his own story and stop his new foe?	DreamWorks Animation/Paramount Pictures	Domestic: Brad Woods, head of licensing and retail marketing, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7011 International: Sheila Clarke, head of international consumer products, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7542	Linda Keln, head of theatrical promotions, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7569; David Bynder, head of home video promotions, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7031	Licensees: Ape Entertainment, Dalmation Press, DecoPac, Freeze, Hallmark, Penguin Books, BDA, THQ, ToyQuest, iStorytime, CSS, Pioneer Balloon, Rubie's Costumes Licensing and promo opps: Theatrical and DVD promotional opportunities are available and DreamWorks is seeking additional partners in select categories
Tangled						
Family	November 24, 2010	(CGI/3-D) When the kingdom's most wanted—and most charming—bandit Flynn Rider hides out in a mysterious tower, he's taken hostage by Rapunzel, a beautiful and feisty tower-bound teen with 70 feet of magical, golden hair. Flynn's curious captor, who's looking for her ticket out of the tower where she's been locked away for years, strikes a deal with the handsome thief, and the unlikely duo sets off on an action-packed escapade, complete with a super-cop horse, an over-protective chameleon and a gruff gang of pub thugs.	Walt Disney Pictures	Mary Beech, VP/GM, global studio franchise development, Disney Consumer Products, mary.beech@disney.com	Don Gross, VP of global promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-7477, don.gross@disney.com	Licensees: Mattel, CDI, Jay Franco, McFarlane, Mad Engine, Lego Licensing and promo opps: Disney is currently looking for partners across a variety of categories
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader						
Family	December 10, 2010	(L) A return to the wonder of C.S. Lewis's beloved world via Narnian ship The Dawn Treader. In this new installment of the blockbuster Chronicles of Narnia film franchise, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie find themselves sucked into a pairing and put out to sea on the Dawn Treader. Their mission—on which the fate of Narnia rests—takes the courageous voyagers from mysterious islands and a river that turns to gold to fateful confrontations with magical creatures and a reunion with their friend and protector, the great lion Aslan.	Walden Media/Twentieth Century Fox	Domestic and International: Robert Marick, EVP of licensing and merchandising, Twentieth Century Fox, 310-369-2207, robert.marick@fox.com	Domestic and International: Robert Marick, EVP of licensing and merchandising, Twentieth Century Fox, 310-369-2207, robert.marick@fox.com	Licensees: HarperCollins Children's Books (publishing) Licensing and promo opps: Additional deals are being finalized for this focused program

Yogi Bear						
Family	December 17, 2010	(4/CGI) The film takes up from the original TV series and follows the adventures of Yogi Bear and his pal Boo-Boo in Jellystone Park. The park has been losing business, so Mayor Brown decides to shut it down and sell the land, meaning Yogi and Boo-Boo will be tossed out of the only home they've ever known. Faced with his biggest challenge ever, Yogi must prove that he really is smarter than the average bear as he and Boo-Boo join forces with their old nemesis Ranger Smith to find a way to save Jellystone Park from closing forever.	Warner Bros.	<p>Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com</p> <p>International: Jordan Sollitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com</p>	<p>Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com</p> <p>International: Jordan Sollitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com</p>	<p>Licensing and promo opps: WBCP is working on a focused licensing program</p>
The Green Hornet						
Family	Holiday 2010	(L) A classic character of film, television, radio, and comic books returns to the big screen in <i>The Green Hornet</i> , starring Seth Rogen as the vigilante crime-fighter, Jay Chou as Kato, his trusty sidekick, and an all-new Black Beauty car.	Sony Pictures/Columbia Pictures	Gregory Economos, SVP, Sony Pictures Global Consumer Products, 310-244-4188, gregory_economos@spe.sony.com	Mary Goss Robino, SVP of global marketing partnerships, Sony Pictures Consumer Marketing, 310-244-3999, mary_robino@spe.sony.com	<p>Licensing and promo opps: Sony is exploring opportunities in select categories</p>
Tron						
Family	Holiday 2010	(L) Rebellious 26-year-old Kevin Flynn travels into the TRON universe on a heroic journey to find his missing father and defeat the evil overlord Clu, learning along the way to accept the responsibility of his remarkable legacy.	Walt Disney Pictures	Lisa Avent, VP/GM global franchise development, Disney Consumer Products, lisa.avent@disney.com	Don Gross, VP of global promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-7477, don.gross@disney.com	<p>Licenseses: Mad Engine, Mighty Fine, Hallmark, Trendsetters, Trends, Sideshow Collectibles</p> <p>Licensing and promo opps: Window for DVD/Blu-ray is still open for licensees</p>
Rango						
Family	March 18, 2011	(A) A household chameleon goes on an adventure to discover its true self. Starring the voice talent of Johnny Depp and directed by Gore Verbinski.	Paramount Pictures	Darren Kyman, executive director, marketing and retail development, Paramount Licensing, 323-956-4463, darren_kyman@paramount.com	Chris Cerbo, VP of global promotions, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-8105, chris_cerbo@paramount.com	<p>Licensing and promo opps: The program is still in development</p>
Hop						
Kids	April 1, 2011	(4/CGI) Blending animation with live action, <i>Hop</i> tells the story of Fred O'Hare (James Marsden), an unemployed 30-year-old whose life is stuck in neutral, and teenage bunny EB (voiced by Russell Brand). Their lives collide when they literally crash into each other. As Fred struggles with the world's worst houseguest, he discovers the future Easter Bunny has no interest in taking over the family business. Chris Meledandri produces with John Cohen through his Universal-based family entertainment company, Illumination Entertainment.	Illumination Entertainment/Universal Pictures	Domestic: Cindy Chang VP and GM, licensing, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-2067 International: Ray De La Rosa, VP, international licensing, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-5694	Michelle Hagen, VP and GM, theatrical promotions, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-8175	<p>Licensing and promo opps: Currently seeking licensing and promotional partners across all categories</p>



FIRST TAKE

Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Story Line (A—animation, L—live action)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotions Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners
Rio						
Kids four to 12	April 8, 2011	(CGI/3-D) From the makers of the Ice Age films, Rio is set in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the lush rainforest of Brazil. The comedy-adventure centers on Blu, a rare macaw who thinks he is the last of his kind. When Blu discovers there's another—and that she's a she—he leaves the comforts of his cage in small-town Minnesota and heads to Rio. But it's far from love at first sight for the domesticated and flight-challenged Blu and the fiercely independent, high-flying female, Jewel.	Blue Sky Studios/ Twentieth Century Fox	Domestic and International: Robert Marick, EVP of licensing and merchandising, Twentieth Century Fox, 310-369-2207, robert.marick@fox.com	Domestic and International: Robert Marick, EVP of licensing and merchandising, Twentieth Century Fox, 310-369-2207, robert.marick@fox.com	Licensing and promo opps: Deals are being finalized and Fox is currently seeking partners across all categories
Thor						
All Ages	May 6, 2011	(L) Director Kenneth Branagh leads a cast that includes Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Anthony Hopkins, Renee Russo and Tom Hiddleston in the God of Thunder's silver screen debut. At the center of the story is The Mighty Thor, a powerful but arrogant warrior whose reckless actions reignite an ancient war. Thor is cast down to Earth and is forced to live among humans as punishment. Once here, Thor learns what it takes to be a true hero when the most dangerous villain of his world sends the darkest forces of Asgard to invade Earth.	Marvel Studios/ Paramount Pictures	Domestic: Paul Gitter, president of consumer products, North America, Marvel Entertainment, 212-576-8578 International: Sandrine de Raspide, EVP, Marvel Entertainment International, 44-207-858-2004	Douglas Finberg, EVP of international marketing, Marvel Studios, 310-550-3100	Licensing and promo opps: Marvel will put together a comprehensive licensing and merchandising program across all core categories to support the production
Kung Fu Panda: The Kaboom of Doom						
Family	June 3, 2011	(CGI) Po is now living his dream as The Dragon Warrior, protecting the Valley of Peace alongside his friends and fellow kung fu masters, The Furious Five. But Po's new life is threatened by the emergence of a formidable villain who plans to use a secret unstoppable weapon to conquer China and destroy kung fu. It is up to Po and The Furious Five to journey across China to face this threat and vanquish it.	DreamWorks Animation/ Paramount Pictures	Domestic: Brad Woods, head of licensing and retail marketing, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7011 International: Sheila Clarke, head of international consumer products, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7542	Linda Kehn, head of theatrical promotions, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7569; David Bynder, head of home video promotions, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7031	Licensees: Ape Entertainment, Dalmation Press, Hallmark, Penguin Books, Rubie's Costumes, THQ Licensing and promo opps: Theatrical and DVD promotional opportunities are available and DreamWorks is seeking additional partners in select categories
Green Lantern						
Boys, men 18-34	June 17, 2011	(L) Ryan Reynolds stars as the popular DC Comics character Green Lantern, a.k.a. test pilot Hal Jordan, who is granted a mystical green ring that bestows him with otherworldly powers, as well as membership into an intergalactic squadron.	Warner Bros.	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.solitto@warnerbros.com	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.solitto@warnerbros.com	Licensees: Mattel has the master toy license Licensing and promo opps: WBSP is looking to build out a broad licensing program

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2					
All Ages	July 15, 2011	(1/3-D) In the second part of the final installment of the Harry Potter series, Harry, Ron and Hermione return to Hogwarts to find and destroy Voldemort's final horcruxes. But when Voldemort discovers their mission, the battle of a lifetime ensues.	Warner Bros.	<p>Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com</p> <p>International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com</p>	<p>Licensing and promo opps: WBCP is looking to roll out a broad licensing program across all key categories</p>
The First Avenger: Captain America					
All ages	July 22, 2011	(1) Chris Evans is set to star as Captain America, and Sebastian Stan will portray Cap's sidekick, Buddy, in the film that focuses on the early days of the Marvel Universe	Marvel Studios/Paramount Pictures	<p>Domestic: Paul Gitter, president of consumer products, North America, Marvel Entertainment, 212-576-8578; International: Sandrine de Raspidie, EVP, Marvel Entertainment International, 44-207-858-2004</p>	<p>Licensing and promo opps: Marvel will put together a comprehensive licensing and merchandising program across all core categories to support the production</p>
Cars 2					
All ages	Summer 2011	(CGI) Lightning McQueen zooms back into action with his best friend Mater in tow to take on the globe's fastest and finest in this new installment of the Cars franchise, directed by Brad Lewis, producer of <i>Ratatouille</i> .	Disney-Pixar/Walt Disney	<p>Mary Beech, VP/GM, global studio franchise development, Disney Consumer Products, mary.beech@disney.com</p>	<p>Licensees: Mattel, Lego, Power Wheels, Leap Frog, KHQ, Isaac Morris, Concept One, Crayola, KCC, Thinkway Toy, Fisher-Price, Kellogg's, Jay Franco, Hallmark, Mead</p> <p>Licensing and promo opps: Disney's licensing program is in progress and promo opportunities are available</p>
The Smurfs					
Family	August 3, 2011	(1/CGI/3-D) When the evil wizard Gargamel chases the Smurfs out of their village, it causes them to tumble through a portal into our world, one that opens only once in a blue moon. The Smurfs must conjure up a real blue moon to make it home before Gargamel tracks them down.	Sony Pictures Animation/Sony Pictures	<p>Gregory Economos, SVP, Sony Pictures Global Consumer Products, 310-244-4188, gregory_economos@spe.sony.com</p>	<p>Licensing and promo opps: Sony is exploring opportunities in select categories</p>
Puss In Boots					
Family	November 4, 2011	(CGI) Well before Puss ever met Shrek, the suave feline hero goes on a swashbuckling ride, as he teams with mastermind Humpty Dumpty and the street-savvy Kitty to steal the famed Goose that lays the Golden Eggs	DreamWorks Animation/Paramount Pictures	<p>Domestic: Brad Woods, head of licensing and retail marketing, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7011</p> <p>International: Sheila Clarke, head of international consumer products, DreamWorks Animation, 818-695-7542</p>	<p>Licensees: Ape Entertainment, Dalmation Press, Hallmark, Penguin Books, THQ</p> <p>Licensing and promo opps: Promotional opportunities are available and DreamWorks is seeking additional partners in select categories</p>



FIRST TAKE

Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Story Line (A—animation, L—live action)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotions Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners
Marvin the Martian						
Family	October 7, 2011	(L/CGI) Based on the classic Looney Tunes character who comes to Earth to destroy Christmas, Marvin's plans are foiled when he gets trapped in a gift box.	Warner Bros. Family Entertainment /Alcon Entertainment	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com	Licensing and promo opps: WBGP is working on a focused licensing program
Happy Feet 2						
All ages	November 18, 2011	(CGI/3-D) The sequel to the Academy Award-winning animated film that grossed roughly US\$584 million at box offices worldwide follows up on the story about a penguin who could not sing but knew how to dance.	Warner Bros.	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com	Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com	Licensing and promo opps: WBGP's licensing program is in development
The Adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn						
Family	December 23, 2011	(CGI/3-D) The first of a two-part 3-D motion-capture film series directed by Stephen Spielberg and Peter Jackson, the film is based on the popular Tintin comic book series about a globetrotting teenage boy reporter.	Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures and DreamWorks/Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures	Darren Kymen, executive director, marketing and retail development, Paramount Licensing, 323-956-4463, darren_kymen@paramount.com	Chris Cerbo, VP of global promotions, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-8105, chris_cerbo@paramount.com	Licensing and promo opps: Licensing partners and promotions are still in development
Arthur Christmas						
Family	Holiday 2011	(Stop motion/CGI) The Christmas movie highlights the technological advances at the North Pole, revealing how Santa and his army of highly trained elves create and distribute gifts across the world on Christmas Eve. Out of 600 million children, one child is left without a gift and it is up to Arthur, Santa's misfit son, to get the last present halfway across the world before Christmas Day.	Sony Pictures Animation/ Sony Pictures	Gregory Economos, SVP, Sony Pictures Global Consumer Products, 310-244-4188, gregory_economos@spe.sony.com	Mary Goss Robino, SVP of global marketing partnerships, Sony Pictures Consumer Marketing, 310-244-3999, mary_robino@spe.sony.com	Licensing and promo opps: Sony is exploring opportunities in select categories

Hong Kong Phooey						
Family	2011	(U/CGI) A live-action feature based on Hanna-Barbera's 1970s animated series about a kung-fu-fighting pup and his feline sidekick.	Warner Bros.	<p>Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com</p> <p>International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com</p>	<p>Domestic: Karen McTier, EVP, domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-3008, karen.mctier@warnerbros.com</p> <p>International: Jordan Solitto, EVP, new initiatives & international licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7807, jordan.sollitto@warnerbros.com</p>	<p>Licensing and promo opps: WBSP is working on a focused licensing program</p>
The Lorax						
All ages	March 2, 2012	(CGI) From producer Chris Meledandri's Illumination Entertainment comes a CGI adaptation of Dr. Seuss's classic 1971 fable about a forest creature, the consequences of greed, and the enduring power of hope.	Universal Pictures	<p>Domestic: Cindy Chang VP and GM, licensing, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-2067</p> <p>International: Ray De La Rosa, VP, international licensing, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-5694</p>	Michelle Hagen, VP and GM, theatrical promotions, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-8175	<p>Licensing and promo opps: Universal is currently seeking promotional partners</p>
The Avengers						
All ages	May 4, 2012	(I) <i>The Avengers</i> brings together the superhero team of Marvel Comics characters—including Iron Man, Captain America, Thor and the Hulk—for the first time, as they are forced to band together to battle the biggest foe they've ever faced.	Marvel Studios/Paramount Pictures	<p>Domestic: Paul Gitter, president of consumer products, North America, Marvel Entertainment, 212-576-8578</p> <p>International: Sandrine de Raspede, EVP, Marvel Entertainment International, 44-207-858-2004</p>	Douglas Finberg, EVP of international marketing, Marvel Studios, 310-550-3100	<p>Licensing and promo opps: Marvel will put together a comprehensive licensing and merchandising program across all core categories to support the production</p>
Battleship						
Boys, men 18-34	May 25, 2012	(U/3-D) Peter Berg is producing and directing the action-adventure film based on Hasbro's classic naval combat game that unfolds across the seas, in the skies and over land.	Universal Pictures	Michael Verrecchia, director of entertainment licensing, Hasbro, 401-431-8502, mverrecchia@hasbro.com	Michelle Hagen, VP and GM, theatrical promotions, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-8175	<p>Licensing and promo opps: While Hasbro works on building the licensing program, Universal is currently seeking promotional partners</p>
Stretch Armstrong						
Boys, men 18-34	2012	(U/3-D) Taylor Lautner (<i>The Twilight Saga</i>) is taking on the role of the title character in this 3-D superhero adventure based on the iconic action figure made popular in the 1970s and re-launched in the 1990s. Producer Brian Grazer is teaming with Hasbro to bring the project to life, while Nick Stoller (<i>Forgetting Sarah Marshall</i>) is rewriting the original screenplay by Steve Oedekerk.	Universal Pictures	Michael Verrecchia, director of entertainment licensing, Hasbro, 401-431-8502, mverrecchia@hasbro.com	Michelle Hagen, VP and GM, theatrical promotions, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, 818-777-8175	<p>Licensing and promo opps: While Hasbro works on building the licensing program, Universal is currently seeking promotional partners</p>



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Cannes, France

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On the move



Finn Arnesen



Kay Benbow



Marjorie Cohn



Lorenzo Dunoyer



Alan Gregg



Illisa Howard



Jon Rutherford



Tramm Wigzell

4Kids Productions (New York, New York, 212-590-2100): The 4Kids Entertainment subsidiary has bumped two of its veteran execs into key creative and operational positions. **Michael Haigney** moves up to creative director and will report to chairman and CEO Alfred Kahn. Haigney is now responsible for the creative direction of all series adaptations and other projects created by 4Kids. **Kristen Gray** has been promoted to head of network operations. In her new role, Gray will oversee day-to-day operations of the TheCW4Kids TV block, 4Kids Productions and the 4Kids.tv website.

BRB Internacional (Madrid, Spain, 34-91-771-1400): BRB is strengthening its sales department and new technologies business by upping **Nuria Queipo** and **Marijo Arnáiz**. Queipo moves from head of customer service to head of sales for Central and Eastern Europe, and will be responsible for managing TV rights. For her part, Arnáiz has been given additional duties as BRB's head of home video entertainment and was also named director of digital media. In this capacity, she will be in charge of social networks, VOD, IPTV, mobile phone applications, video games and interactive apps with respect to both broadcast rights and marketing campaigns.

CBeebies (London, England, 44-181-576-3479): Seasoned children's TV exec **Kay Benbow** has been named controller of the Beeb's preschool channel, taking over from Michael Carrington. Benbow moves up from her role as head of CBeebies Production, Animation and Acquisitions, and plans to make the move to Salford when BBC Children's moves to BBC North next year. Benbow began her career with BBC World and Domestic Services and moved to BBC Children's in 1988. She built the preschool department as the CBeebies channel was launched and has served as executive producer on a wide range of in-house and independent shows, including *Something Special*, *In The Night Garden*, *Numberjacks* and *ZingZillas*.

Cartoon Network (Atlanta, Georgia, 404-827-1500): The Network has promoted two programming executives in its original series group. **Tramm Wigzell** is the new VP of action adventure, and **Nick Weidenfeld** is overseeing comedy development as VP. Wigzell, who served as director of action adventure for original series, will now lead the development of live-action and animation programming in the action genre. Weidenfeld is looking after Cartoon's animation and live-action original comedy programs.

Corus Entertainment (Toronto, Canada, 416-588-5571): **Doug Murphy** is expanding his remit well beyond Canadian kidnets YTV and Treehouse and commercial arm Nelvana Enterprises, as he takes on the role of president of Corus Television, which includes Corus kidnets, 50% stakes in Teletoon and Teletoon Retro, W Network, Cosmopolitan TV, VIVA and W Movies, CMT (Canada), Sundance Channel (Canada) and HBO Canada. Murphy joined Corus Entertainment in 2002 and most recently held the post of EVP and GM of Corus Kids and president of Nelvana. There, he oversaw Corus's global kids business, including specialty networks Treehouse, YTV and Nickelodeon (Canada), as well as Nelvana, Kids Can Press, KidsCo and qubo.

Endemol (London, England, 44-870-333-1700): Endemol has tapped former FremantleMedia exec **Olivier Gers** as CEO of Endemol Worldwide Brands. Gers will lead the new division focused on extending Endemol properties across multiple platforms, including licensing and merchandising and the creation of game applications and social gaming sites. Gers is working from Endemol Group's London offices and will be joined by **Joerg Bachmaier**, who has been appointed SVP and GM of the Americas. Gers brings experience overseeing global brands including the *Idol* and *Got Talent* franchises, *The Price Is Right*, *The X Factor* and *Baywatch* to his new post.

Hasbro Studios (Los Angeles, California, 310-786-4601): Hasbro Studios has scooped up international programming and distribution exec **Finn Arnesen** to lead its global expansion effort as SVP of international distribution and development. In this newly created role, Arnesen is responsible for managing Hasbro's global content sales, distribution, and channel and program development activities outside of North America, spanning television, online and other emerging media platforms. Arnesen comes to Hasbro from a 17-year stint at Turner Broadcasting System, where he oversaw programming and development for Cartoon Network International and other Turner-owned kids channels.

MTV Networks International (London, England, 44-207-478-6516): Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products has named **John Collins** as its new retail marketing director for EMEA. Collins comes from Chorion, where he managed European retail operations and launched The Mr. Men Show and Olivia into the market. In his new role, he'll be tasked with creating relationships with retailers such as Carrefour, Auchan, Amazon, Tesco, MediaMarkt Saturn and Toys 'R' Us.

Nickelodeon (New York, New York, 212-846-8018): **Marjorie Cohn** has been upped to president of original programming and development at Nickelodeon/MTVN Kids & Family Group, and will handle Nick's slate of series, movies and live-action offerings. Cohn currently oversees the kidnet's live-action creative executive teams on both the East and West coasts, managing the creative direction between series production and network departments. Cohn helms all original programming for Nick at Nite and TeenNick, as well as all original television movies.

Sesame Workshop (New York, New York, 212-875-6678): Sesame Workshop welcomes **Lorenzo Dunoyer** to the post of senior producer for *Plaza Sesamo*, the original Latin American version of *Sesame Street*. Dunoyer brings experience working for US network affiliates including NBC, PBS, Univision and Discovery Networks Latin America/Iberia to his new role. Most recently, he served as senior consultant of content and production for RTV/Senal Columbia.

Teletoon Canada (Toronto, Canada, 416-956-2060): **Alan Gregg** has been named director of original content for Teletoon Canada and will oversee content development and production for Teletoon's two English and two French networks and their respective multiplatform services. Gregg is now responsible for the kidnet's original production team in Toronto and Montreal and will work with production partners across Canada. Gregg has spent more than 12 years in the children's television business, starting at YTV. Most recently, he had been story editing a new preschool series for guru Studio, and prior to that he opened a Toronto office for Ireland's Brown Bag Films, where he oversaw the studio's project and business development.

The Hub (Los Angeles, California, 323-549-4300): The Hasbro/Discovery Kids joint-venture has hired five senior executives in time for its launch in late 2010. As SVP of business and legal

affairs, **Joshua Meyer** will work directly with CEO and president Margaret Loesch on production and talent deals, acquisitions, licensing, marketing, promotions, sales, operations, new media, digital distribution, copyrights, clearances and corporate regulatory and tax issues. He joins the network after serving as co-general counsel and SVP of business and legal affairs for Cookie Jar Entertainment since 2005. **Jordan Beck**, VP of creative services and on-air promotions, is tasked with communicating The Hub's positioning. He comes from start-up network ReelzChannel, where he was responsible for on-air promotions and off-air advertising. He also oversaw promotional spots for on-air, advertising and affiliate presentations for Fox Kids. **Greg Heanue**, VP of marketing and promotions comes to The Hub from The Weather Channel, where he served as VP of consumer and ad sales marketing. Previously, he was senior director of marketing at Cartoon Network. In his new role at The Hub, he will develop marketing and promotion strategies. **Fred Poston**, VP of operations, is responsible for the workflows being used for the launch and ongoing operations. He was previously an operations executive at Reelzchannel, TV Guide, ABC Family and the WB Television Network. Finally, VP of production and post-production **Michael Ross** will oversee development and execution of production and post-production for programming, including recruiting production companies and producers. Ross was head of production and executive producer for Baby Einstein and Disney Baby.

Tricon Films & Television (Toronto, Canada, 416-341-9926): The Canadian prodco has scooped up **Jon Rutherford** to grow its global distribution efforts as VP of international sales and acquisitions. Working with Carrie Mudd, (SVP of development and international sales), Andrea Gorfolova, (president), and Lia Dolente, (manager of international sales and publicity), Rutherford will be responsible for selling Tricon's factual and scripted catalogue and building up its fledgling kids division. Along with Mudd, Rutherford will focus on worldwide television and home video sales, as well as building digital, new media and merchandising and licensing strategies for all titles. The pair will continue to add to Tricon's sales team and lead the charge to acquire new content across all genres and platforms. Prior to joining Tricon, Rutherford worked for Toronto, Canada-based Portfolio Entertainment, where he was responsible for worldwide acquisitions and sales.

Turner CN Enterprises (London, England, 44-207-693-1000): The merchandising and licensing arm of Cartoon Network has appointed **Ilissa Howard** as director of North and South Asia CNE and Asia Pacific product development. In her newly created position, Howard will be based in Hong Kong and report directly to Dulce Lim-Chen, VP of CNE Asia Pacific. She is now responsible for the overall CNE business in Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, South Asia and Taiwan and will spearhead CNE's product development initiatives, working closely with the creative team on developing new portfolios for Cartoon Network original properties, acquisitions and regional properties. Previously, Howard was global brand director at Toys 'R' Us, and before that she held a global toys manager position at Disney and Mattel/Fisher-Price.

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The world's entertainment content market

AnneCy	June 7-12	AnneCy, France	33-4-5010-0900	www.anneCy.org	Animation
Licensing International Expo	June 8-10	Las Vegas, NV	203-882-1300	www.licensingexpo.com	Lic/Merch
Banff Television Festival	June 13-16	Banff, Canada	403-678-9260	www.bwtf.com	TV
nextMEDIA Banff	June 13-16	Banff, Canada	403-678-1216	www.nextmediaevents.com	Multimedia
World Summit on Media for Children & Youth	June 14-18	Karlstad, Sweden	46-5-4700-1806	www.wskarlstad2010.se	TV/Prod/Prog
E3 Expo	June 15-17	Los Angeles, CA	805-654-0171	www.e3expo.com	Inter/Games
DISCOP East	June 22-24	Budapest, Hungary	33-1-4229-3224	www.discop.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
PromaxBDA: The Conference	June 22-24	Los Angeles, CA	310-788-7600	www.promaxbda.org	TV/Mktg
ASTRA Marketplace	June 27-30	Providence, RI	312-222-0984	www.astratoy.org	Toys/Merch
Christian Retail Show	June 27-30	St. Louis, MO	719-265-9895	www.christianretailshow.com	Lic/Merch
The Children's Media Conference	June 30-July 2	Sheffield, England	N/A	www.thechildrensmediaconference.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Games Convention	July 8-10	Leipzig, Germany	212-974-8841 (US)	www.gc-germany.de	Inter/Games
Tokyo Toy Show	July 15-18	Tokyo, Japan	81-3-3829-2513	www.toys.or.jp	Toys/Games
Seoul Character Fair	July 21-25	Seoul, Korea	82-2-6000-8572	www.characterfair.kr	Licensing
SPP: Seoul Cartoon & Animation Market	July 21-23	Seoul, Korea	82-2-3455-8355	www.sppseoul.com	Anim
Comic-Con International	July 22-25	San Diego, CA	619-491-2475	www.comic-con.org	Pub/Mktg/Promo
SIGGRAPH 2010	July 26-30	Los Angeles, CA	312-321-6830	www.siggraph.org	Inter/Anim/MM
Little Airplane Academy	Aug. 14-16	New York, NY	212-965-8999	www.littleairplane.com	TV/Prod
New York International Gift Fair	Aug. 14-19	New York, NY	914-421-3344	www.nyigf.com	Lic/Mfg/Merch
MAGIC Marketplace	Aug. 17-19	Las Vegas, NV	818-593-5000	www.magiconline.com	Lic/App
International Digital Content Conference	Aug. 17-19	Seoul, Korea	82-2-2016-4077	www.aicit.org/idc	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Cartoon Forum	Sep. 14-17	Sopron, Hungary	32-2-242-9343	www.cartoon-media.be	Anim/TV
Brand Licensing Europe	Sep. 28-30	London, England	44-208-956-2661	www.brandlicensing.eu	Lic/Merch
MIPCOM Junior	Oct. 2-3	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.mipcomjunior.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
MIPCOM	Oct. 4-8	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.mipcom.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Fall Toy Preview	Oct. 5-8	Dallas, TX	212-675-1141	www.toyassociation.org	Toys/Games
Frankfurt Book Fair	Oct. 6-10	Frankfurt, Germany	49-69-210-2256	www.book-fair.com	Publishing
New York Comic-Con	Oct. 8-10	New York, NY	203-840-5321	www.newyorkcomiccon.com	Publishing
ABC Kids Show	Oct. 10-13	Las Vegas, NV	210-691-4848	www.theabcshow.com	Mfg/Merch
Ottawa International Animation Festival	Oct. 20-24	Ottawa, Canada	613-232-8769	www.ottawa.awn.com	Anim/TV
Cinekid Festival	Oct. 20-29	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	31-20-531-7890	www.cinekid.nl	Film
American Film Market	Nov. 3-10	Los Angeles, CA	310-446-1000	www.ifta-online.org	Film
SPAA Conference	Nov. 16-19	Sydney, Australia	61-2-9360-8988	www.spaa.org.au	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Toy and Game Inventors Fair	Nov. 18-19	Chicago, IL	847-677-8277	www.toyandgameinventors.com	Toys/Games
Chicago Toy and Game Fair	Nov. 20-21	Chicago, IL	847-677-8277	www.chitag.com	Toys/Games
Cartoon Feature	Nov. 22-24	Munich, Germany	322-242-9353 (Belgium)	www.cartoon-media.be	Film/Anim
Média-Jeunes	Nov. 26-27	Montreal, Canada	514-597-6809	www.act-aet.tv	Prod/Dist
Dubai World Game Expo	Nov. 29-Dec. 1	Dubai, UAE	971-4362-4717	www.gameexpo.ae	Inter/Games
Dubai International Character & Licensing Fair	Nov. 29-Dec. 1	Dubai, UAE	971-4362-4717	www.character.ae	Lic/Merch
Asia Television Forum	Dec. 8-10	Singapore	65-6780-4697	www.asiatvforum.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Hong Kong International Licensing Show	Jan. 10-12, 2011	Hong Kong	852-183-0668	www.hklicensingshow.com	Lic/Merch
Hong Kong Toys & Games Fair	Jan. 10-13	Hong Kong	852-2240-4435	www.hktoyfair.hktcd.com	Toys
NATPE	Jan. 24-26	Miami, FL	310-453-4440	www.natpe.org	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
The Toy Fair	Jan. 25-27	London, England	44-207-701-7127	www.toyfair.co.uk	Toys
Toy Fair	Feb. 13-16	New York, NY	212-675-1141	www.toyassociation.org	Toys/Games
KidScreen Summit	Feb. 15-18	New York, NY	416-408-2300	www.kidscreensummit.com	EVERYTHING KIDS!
MIPTV	Apr. 4-8	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.miptv.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist

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Mascot makeovers

Capturing a bit of that Teletubby/Yo Gabba Gabba! chic, the official mascots of the 2012 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in London were unveiled last month. Named Wenlock and Mandeville, noted children's author Michael Morpurgo developed a back story for the pair. *Out Of The Rainbow*, available on the Games' website, tells the story of how the twosome sprang forth from leftover drops of steel found at the Olympic Stadium's construction site. Bring on the plush.



All together now

New social network Togetherville.com lets parents and kids play together in an online neighborhood where safety comes first. Targeted at the under-10 set, this free social site is an outlet for the growing number of young children hopping online to watch videos and message with friends. The community can be synched to Facebook and allows parents to create their child's network of friends and family.

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